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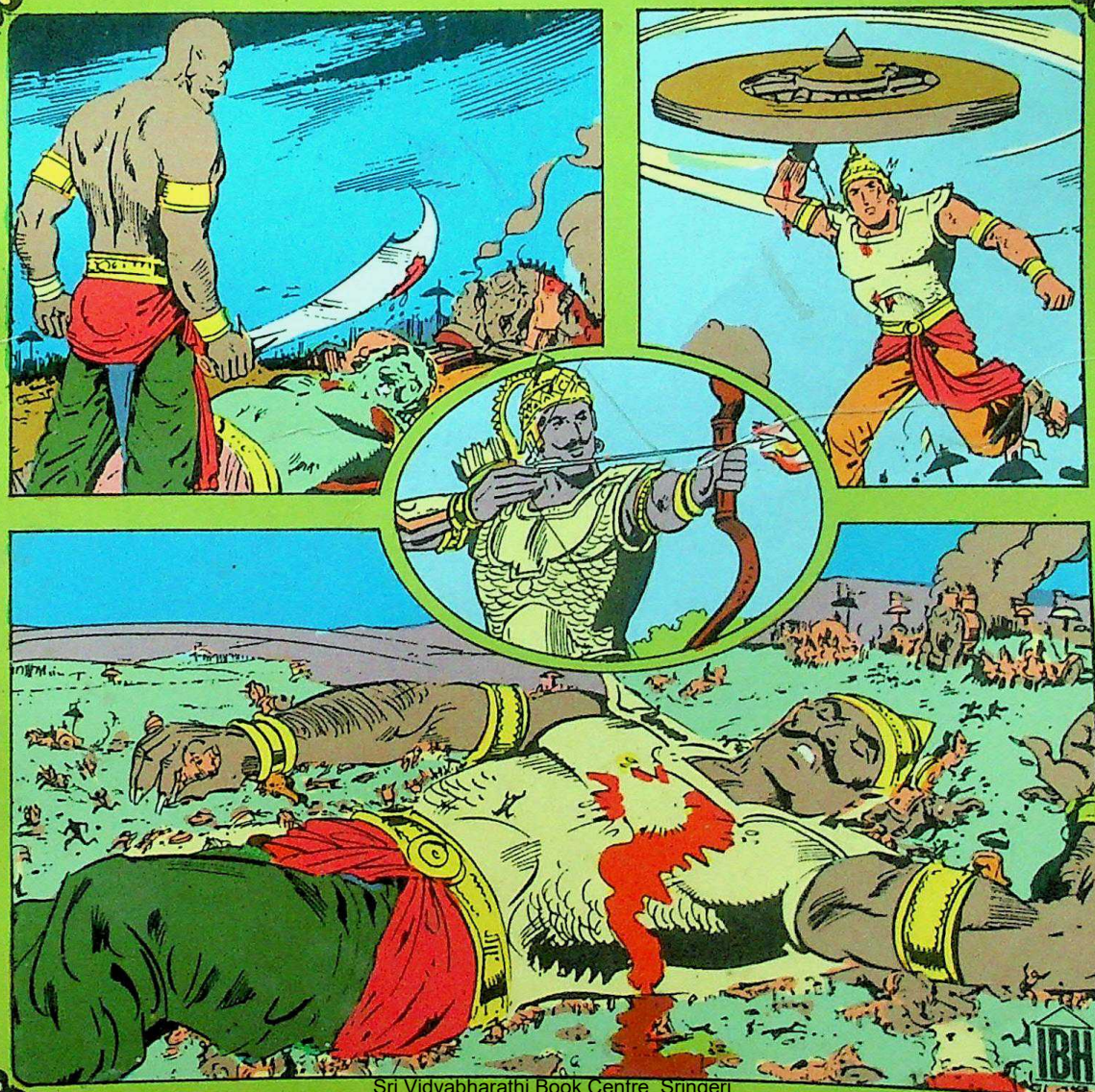
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

MAHABHARATA

ARJUNA WREAKS HAVOC

• THE SLAYING OF ABHIMANYU • ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW • BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT.



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ARJUNA WREAKS HAVOC

Veda Vyasa's epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake sacrifice) conducted by King Janamejaya, the great grandson of Vyasa.

Our earlier volumes on the Mahabharata described the ancestry and growing years of the Kauravas and the Pandavas, the thirteen years of exile spent in the forest by the Pandavas, the failure of peace missions, the inevitable war at Kurukshetra, as well as the details of the battle during the first thirteen days.

The subsequent three volumes narrate the courageous attempt by Abhimanyu to penetrate the complex "Chakravyuha" (wheel formation) the slaying of Jayadratha by Arjuna to avenge his son's death, the battle which continued through the night on the fourteenth day of the terrible war and also the tragic end of Dronacharya.

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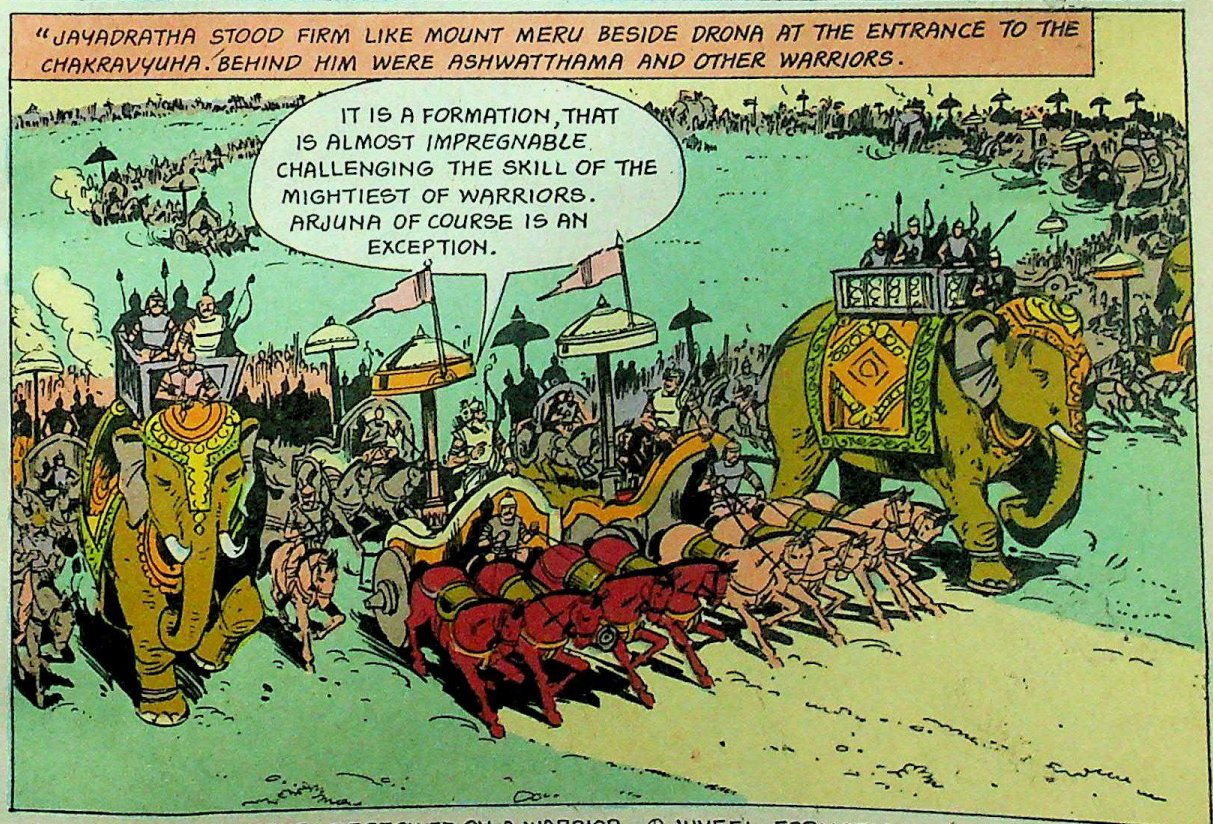
Mahabharata - 34
The Slaying Of Abhimanyu



* THE HIGHEST HONOUR BESTOWED ON A WARRIOR. ⊕ WHEEL FORMATION.

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THERE IS SCARCELY ANYTHING ABOUT WARFARE THAT ARJUNA DOESN'T KNOW. YOU MUST SOMEHOW DISTRACT HIS ATTENTION FROM THE CHAKRAVYUHA.

FAR SOUTH OF THE BATTLEFIELD AWAY FROM THE CHAKRAVYUHA, THE SAMSHAPTAKAS* HAILED ARJUNA.

ARJUNA! YOU HAVE STILL NOT VANQUISHED US!

THE SAMSHAPTAKAS ARE AGAIN CHALLENGING ME!

"ARJUNA RESPONDED TO THEIR CHALLENGE AGAIN, LEAVING THE PANDAVA ARMY TO STRUGGLE AGAINST DRONA'S DIFFICULT CHAKRA FORMATION. ALL THE GREAT PANDAVA WARRIORS DHRISTRADYUMNA, SHIKHANDI, NAKULA, SAHADEVA...

* MERCENARIES WHO VOW NOT TO LEAVE THE BATTLEFIELD, WITHOUT WINNING.

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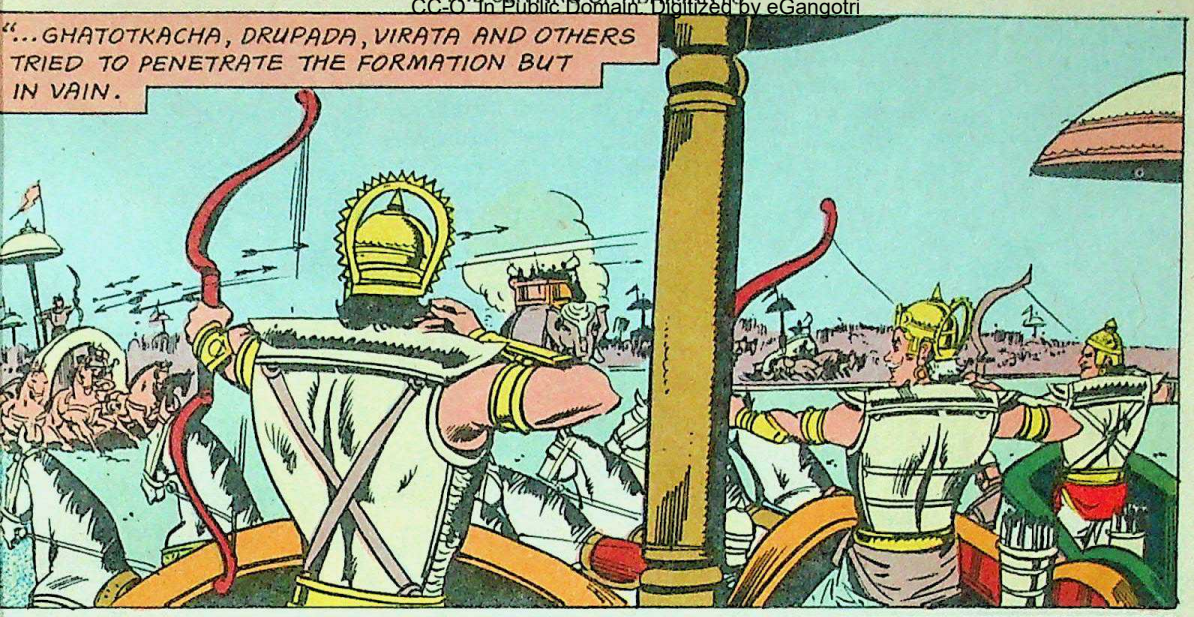

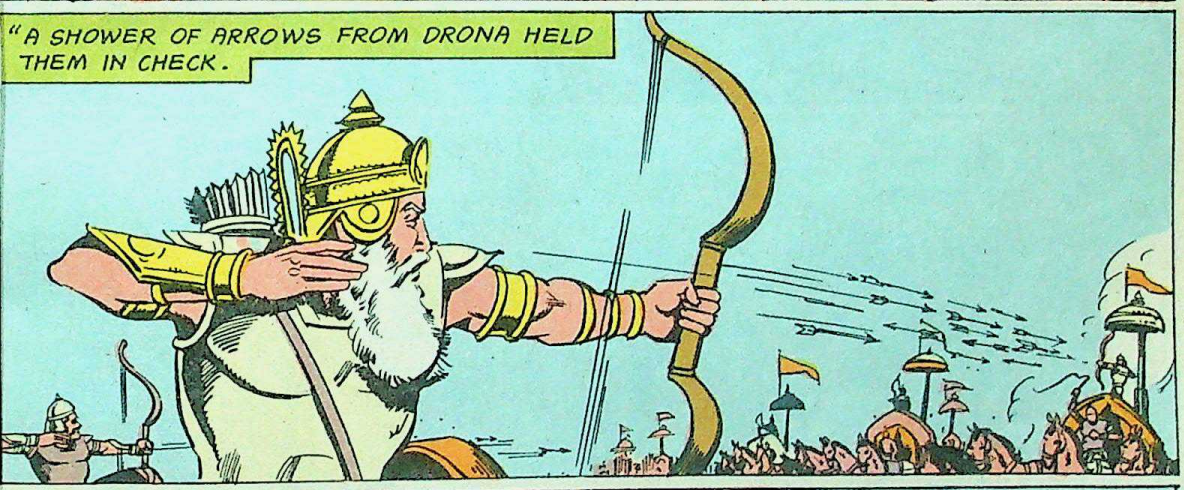

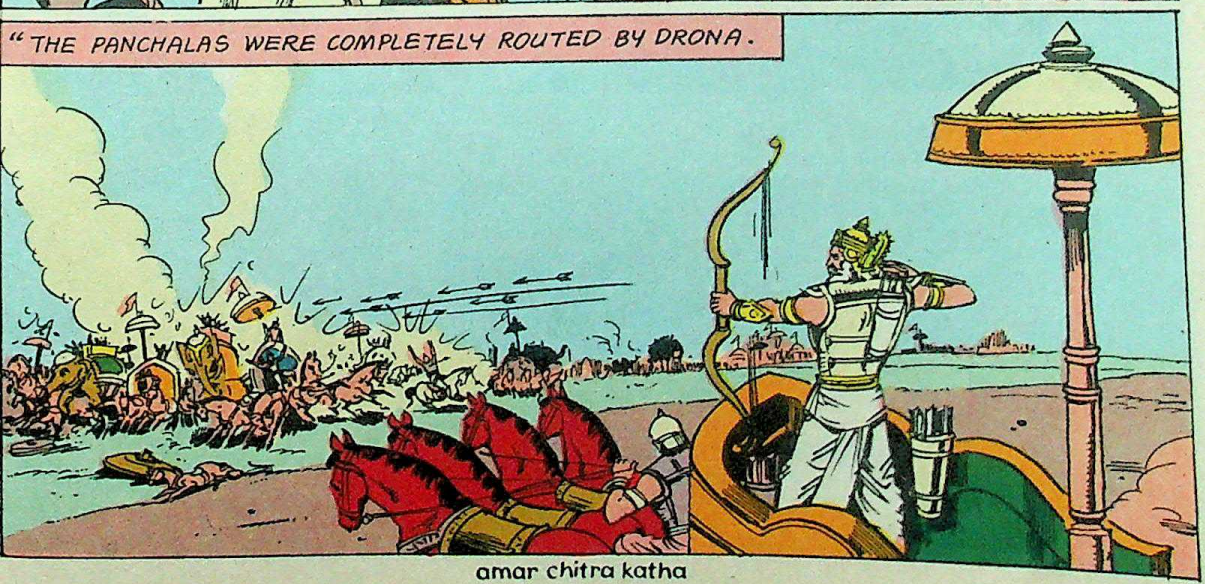

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"YUDHISHTHIRA WAS EXASPERATED.

IS THERE NONE IN OUR ARMY WHO CAN FACE DRONA'S WRATH ?

HE TURNED TO ABHIMANYU, THE YOUNG SON OF ARJUNA —

DO SOMETHING TO SAVE US THE EMBARRASSMENT WHEN ARJUNA RETURNS FROM FIGHTING THE SAMSHAPTAKAS.

NONE OF US KNOW HOW TO GET ACROSS THIS CHAKRAVYUHA.

BESIDES KRISHNA, ARJUNA AND PRADYUMNA, ONLY YOU KNOW HOW TO BREAK THROUGH THE CHAKRAVYUHA.

ABHIMANYU, USE YOUR VALOUR AND SKILL AT THIS CRUCIAL HOUR AND DESTROY DRONA'S FORCES!

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"ABHIMANYU REPLIED —

O GREAT KING! FOR THE GLORY OF MY RACE I SHALL CERTAINLY FORCE MY WAY THROUGH THIS FORMIDABLE FORMATION BUT...

...I KNOW ONLY HOW TO PENETRATE THE CHAKRAVYUHA.

IF I AM TRAPPED INSIDE, I WON'T KNOW HOW TO FIND MY WAY OUT.

O ABHIMANYU! MAKE AN INROAD INTO THIS IMPENETRABLE FORMATION. WE WILL ALL FOLLOW YOU INSIDE AND PROTECT YOU THEREAFTER.

"BHEEMA SAID —

SON, I WILL COME WITH YOU. BESIDES DHRISTRADYUMNA, WITH HIS, VALIANT PANCHALAS, WILL FOLLOW YOU.

AT EVERY POINT WHERE YOU BREAK THROUGH THE FORMATION, WE WILL KILL THE MIGHTY WARRIORS OF THE KAURAVAS AND CONTINUE TO SHATTER THE CHAKRA.

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"THE VALOROUS ABHIMANYU DECLARED —

SUCH A FEAT WILL I PERFORM TODAY THAT MY PARENTS AND MY UNCLE KRISHNA WILL BE PROUD OF ME.

COME, CHARIOTEER, LEAD ME ON TO DRONA.

"THE CHARIOTEER REPLIED —

THIS IS A TREMENDOUS TASK ASSIGNED TO YOU BY YOUR ELDERS. PAUSE AND PONDER AWHILE BEFORE YOU SET FORTH.

"ABHIMANYU LAUGHED ALOUD.

I CAN VANQUISH DRONA'S FORCES WITH EASE. LET US PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY.

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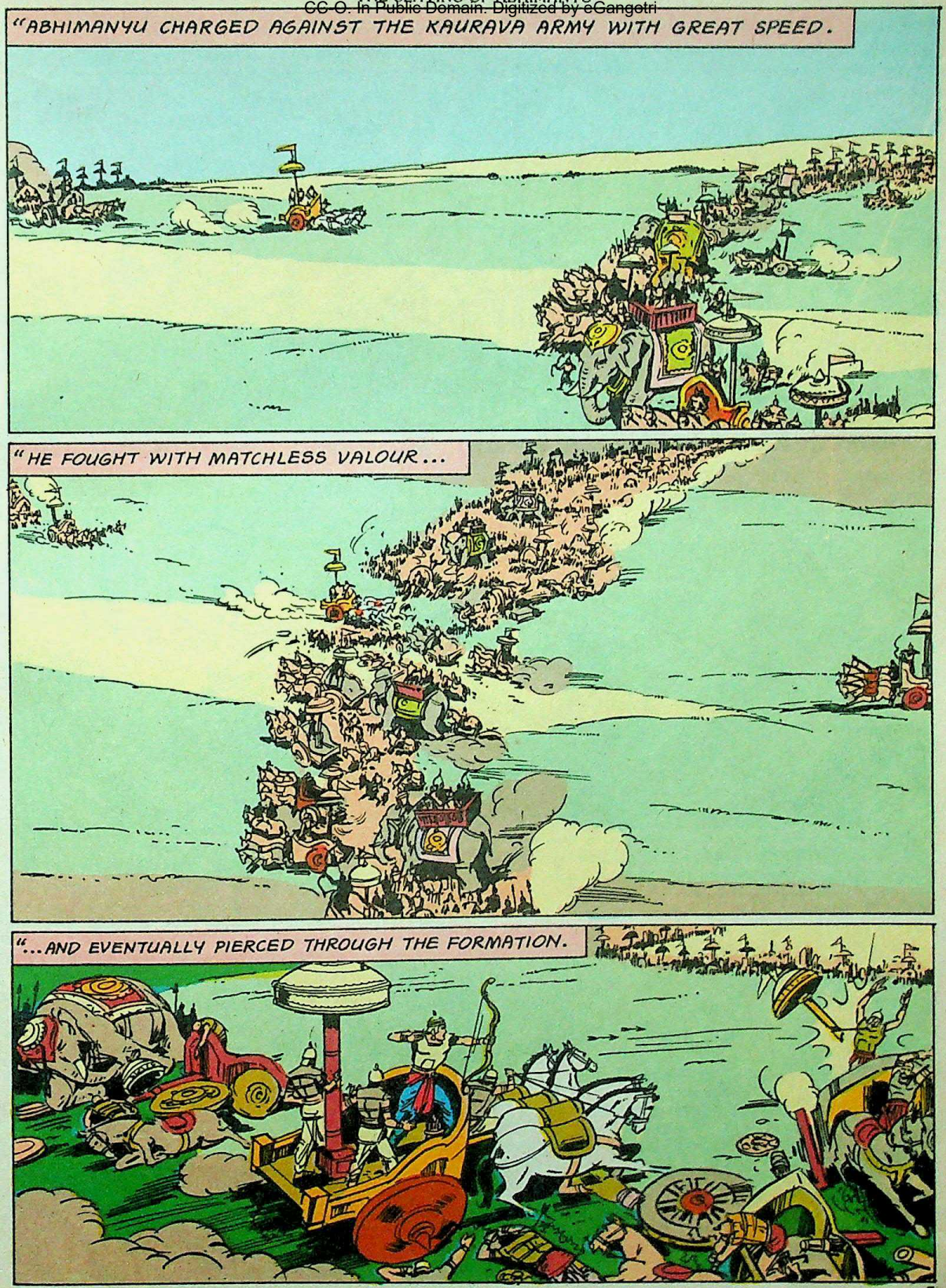

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"HOWEVER, WITHIN MOMENTS, THE KAURAVA WARRIORS SURROUNDED HIM.

IT WAS A FEARFUL BATTLE THAT ABHIMANYU FOUGHT SINGLE-HANDEDLY.

"CHARIOTS FELL INTO PIECES AS HE ADVANCED.

"THE FRIGHTENED KAURAVA ARMY SCATTERED PELL-MELL.

"UNABLE TO CONTAIN HIS ANGER, DURYODHANA CHARGED AHEAD AGAINST ABHIMANYU.

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"DRONA ENTREATED THE FLEEING KAURAVAS —

HALT, O MIGHTY WARRIORS! PROTECT DURYODHANA FOR HIS VERY LIFE IS IN DANGER.

"EXHORTED BY DRONA, SOME OF THE MIGHTY WARRIORS RETURNED TO THE SCENE AND SURROUNDED DURYODHANA TO PROTECT HIM.

"DURING THE FIERCE BATTLE THAT ENSUED, ABHIMANYU SHATTERED KARNA'S ARMOUR.

AAH!

"ONE OF HIS ARROWS MADE SHALYA UNCONSCIOUS.

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"EXCEEDINGLY PLEASED WITH ABHIMANYU'S VALOUR, DRONA SAID TO KRIPA —

THERE IS NONE AS VALIANT IN BATTLE AS YOUNG ABHIMANYU AND YET HE APPEARS TO BE FIGHTING WITH RESTRAIN.

DURYODHANA VERY ANGRY. HE DECLARED —

DRONA IS DELIBERATELY SPARING THE LIFE OF ABHIMANYU, SON OF HIS FAVOURITE PUPIL ARJUNA.

SAFE UNDER DRONA'S PROTECTION, ABHIMANYU IS ACTING BRAVE AND MIGHTY. VANQUISH HIM! KILL HIM!

"DUHSHASANA SAID —

I SWEAR I WILL KILL THIS SON OF ARJUNA!

"AS DUHSHASANA APPROACHED, ABHIMANYU SHATTERED HIS BOW WITH AN ARROW.

"HE THEN SHOT ARROW AFTER DEADLY ARROW WHICH WOUNDED DUHSHASANA AND KNOCKED HIM UNCONSCIOUS.

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"ABHIMANYU GREATLY TORMENTED THE KAURAVA ARMY.

"MEANWHILE, THE OTHER PANDAVAS WERE TRYING TO BREAK INTO THE CHAKRAVYUHA IN A BID TO REACH ABHIMANYU.

"SEEING THIS, JAYADRATHA RUSHED TO THE SPOT...

"...AND RESTRAINED THE PANDAVAS WHILE BRAVELY WITHSTANDING THEIR ONSLAUGHT.

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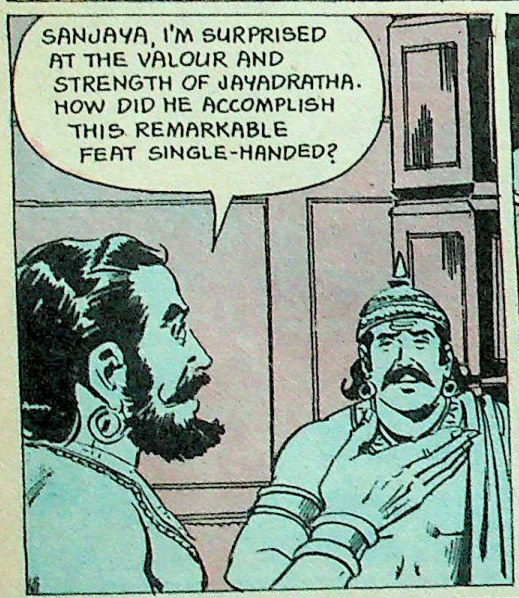
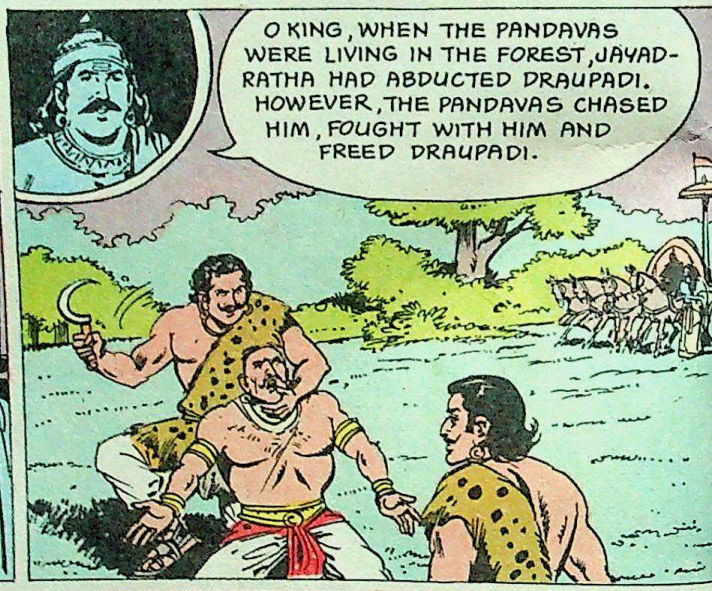
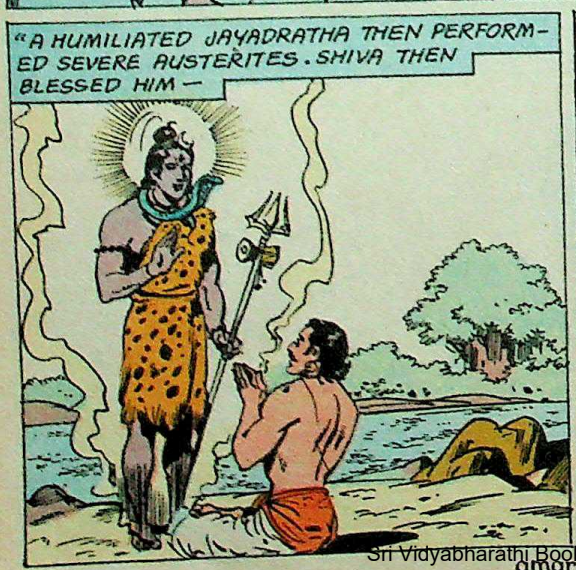
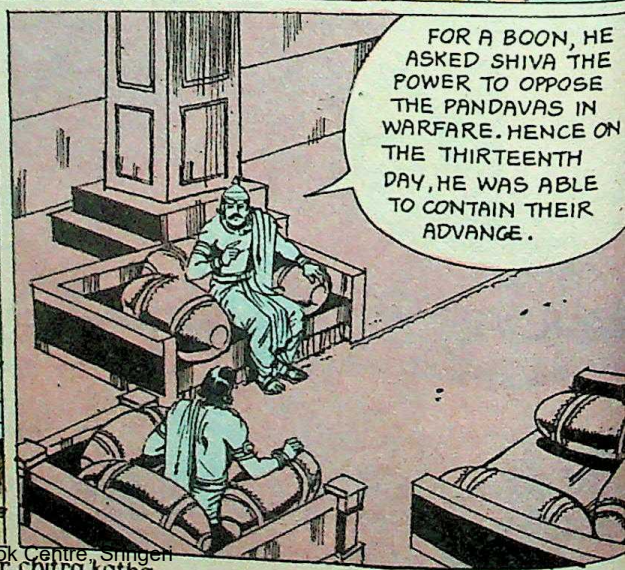
"THE KAURAVAS HAILED JAYADRATHA'S VALOUR AND RUSHED TO HIS SUPPORT.









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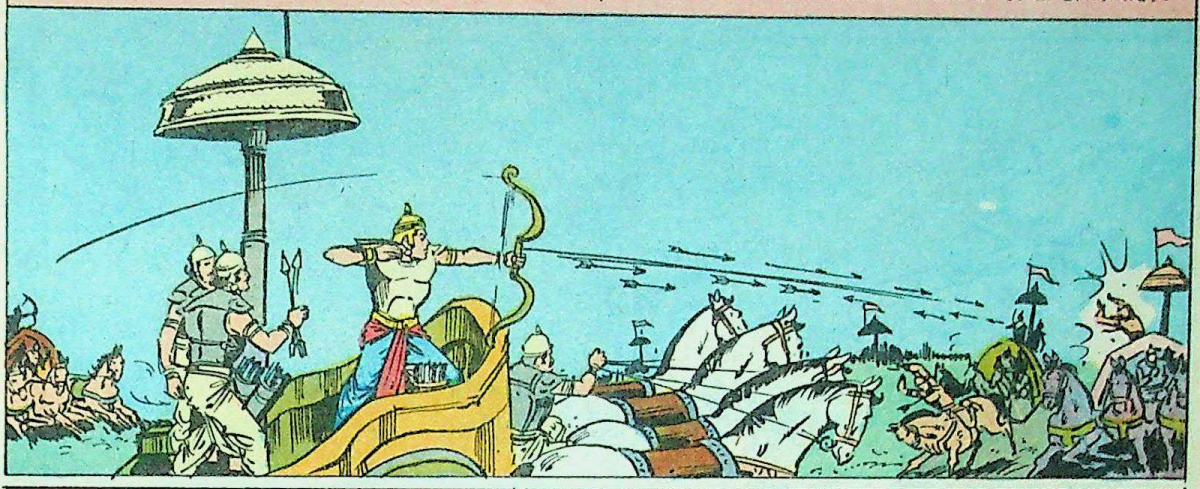
"MEANWHILE, ABHIMANYU THOUGH ISOLATED, BATTLED ON BRAVELY INSIDE THE CHAKRA.



"USING THE WEAPONS THAT ARJUNA HAD OBTAINED FROM THE GANDHARVAS, ABHIMANYU CREATED THE ILLUSION OF THOUSANDS OF ABHIMANYUS AROUND THE KAURAVAS.

*GOD OF DEATH

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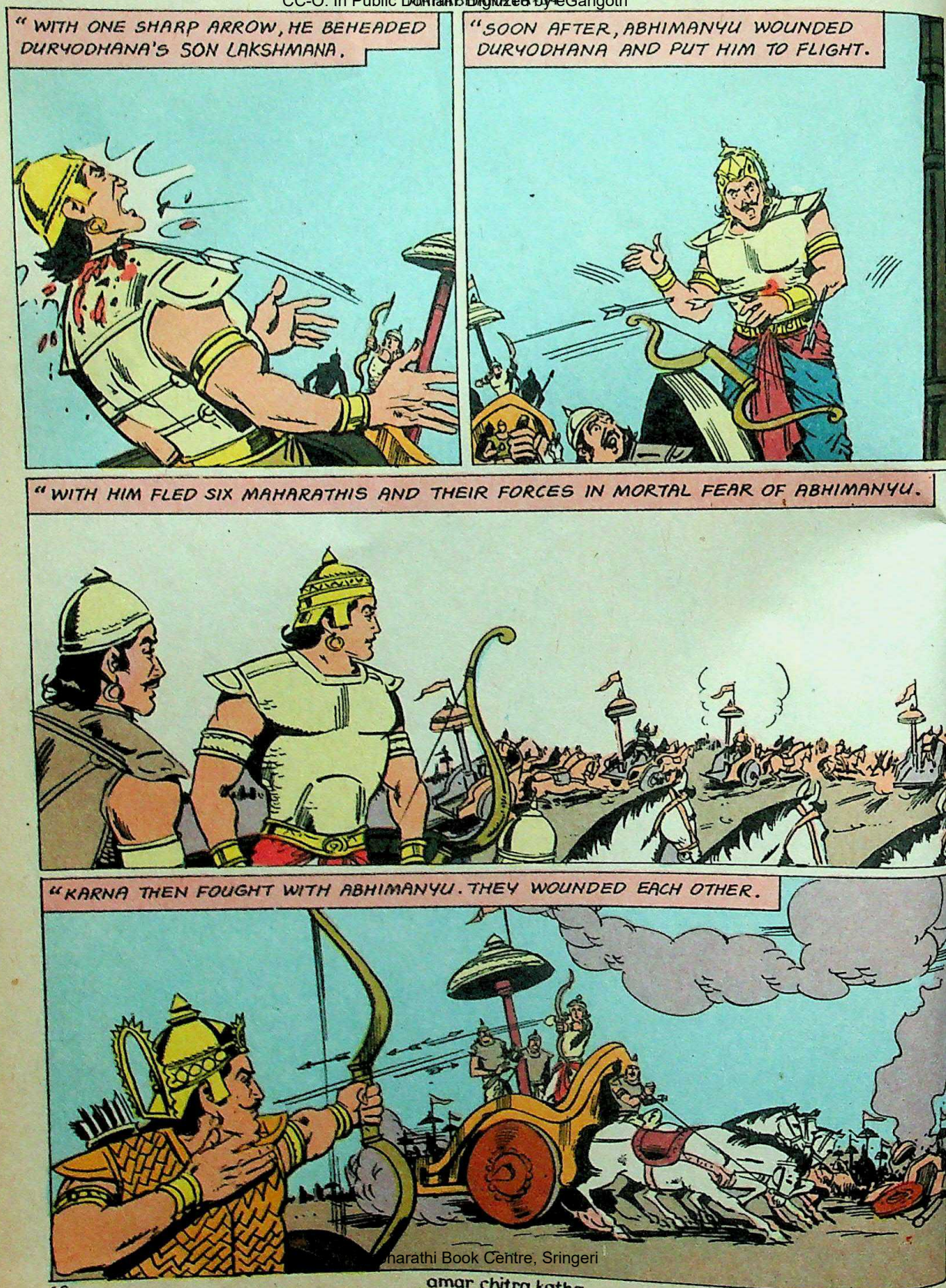

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"SEEING ALL THE KAURAVAS TORMENTED BY ABHIMANYU, KARNA ASKED DRONA —

HOW CAN WE KILL ABHIMANYU, O GRANDSIRE ?

"DRONA ANSWERED —

HURT AS I AM BY HIS ARROWS, I CANNOT HELP BUT ADMIRE HIS SPEED AND SKILL.

"KARNA SAID —

OH ! THE PAIN HE IS CAUSING ME WITH HIS ARROWS IS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO BEAR. BUT FOR THE CALL OF DUTY AS A WARRIOR I WOULD HAVE FLED THE FIELD.

"DRONA LAUGHED ALOUD AND SAID TO KARNA—

IT WAS I WHO TAUGHT HIS FATHER, ARJUNA, TO DON THE ARMOUR IN SUCH A WAY THAT NO ARROW CAN PIERCE IT. ABHIMANYU HAS OBVIOUSLY LEARNT THE ART FROM HIS FATHER.

HIS ARMOUR IS IMPENETRABLE. TRY, IF YOU CAN, TO CUT HIS BOW STRING FROM BEHIND, AND DESTROY HIS CHARIOT.

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"EAGERLY FOLLOWING DRONA'S ADVICE, KARNA SHOT ABHIMANYU'S BOW TO PIECES.

KRITAVARMA KILLED ABHIMANYU'S HORSES.

"AND KRIPA SHOT DEAD BOTH THE REAR ATTENDANTS OF ABHIMANYU.

"AND THEN SIX MAHARATHIS SHOWERED ARROWS ON THE YOUNG WARRIOR WHO HAD BEEN DEPRIVED OF HIS CHARIOT.

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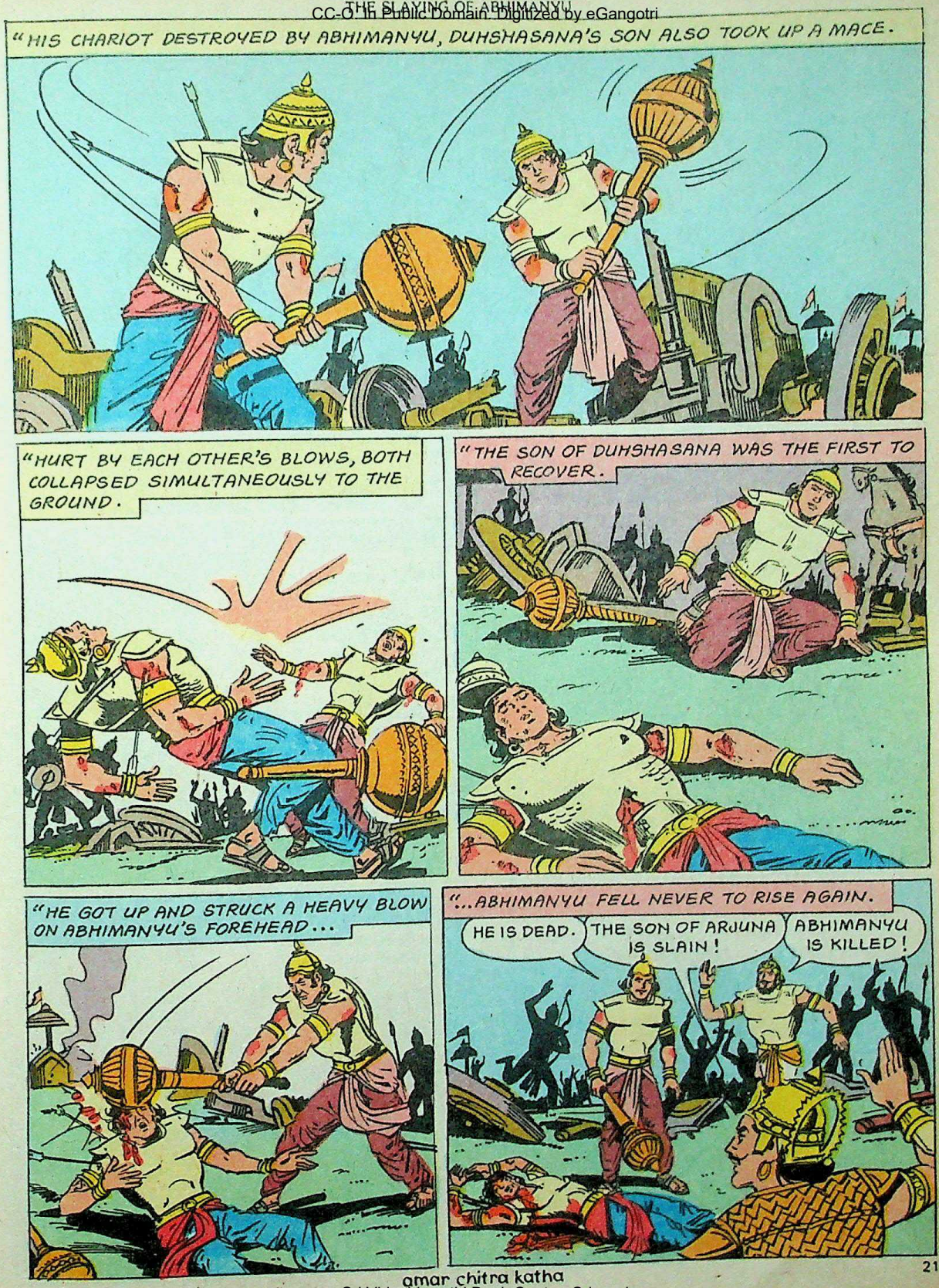

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"THE SOLDIERS OF THE PANDAVA ARMY WERE TERRIFIED TO HEAR THE NEWS. THEY BEGAN TO FLEE THE BATTLEFIELD.

RUN!

ABHIMANYU IS DEAD!

ABHIMANYU KILLED!

RUN!

YUDHISHTHIRA TRIED TO STOP HIS MEN FROM RUNNING AWAY.

COME BACK! ABHIMANYU HAS SURELY ATTAINED HEAVEN BY THE VALOUR SHOWN ON THE BATTLEFIELD. HAVE PATIENCE, WE WILL OVERCOME THE ENEMIES.

"BUT THE DEMORALISED PANDAVA ARMY RETURNED TO THE CAMP IN DEEP SORROW.

"INCONSOLABLE, YUDHISHTHIRA LAMENTED.

ALAS! KRISHNA'S BELOVED NEPHEW, THE VALIANT ABHIMANYU, IS DEAD.

HOW WILL I FACE ARJUNA NOW? HOW WILL I FACE THE BEREAVED MOTHER SUBHADRA?

HOW WILL WE RELATE THIS TRAGEDY TO KRISHNA AND ARJUNA?

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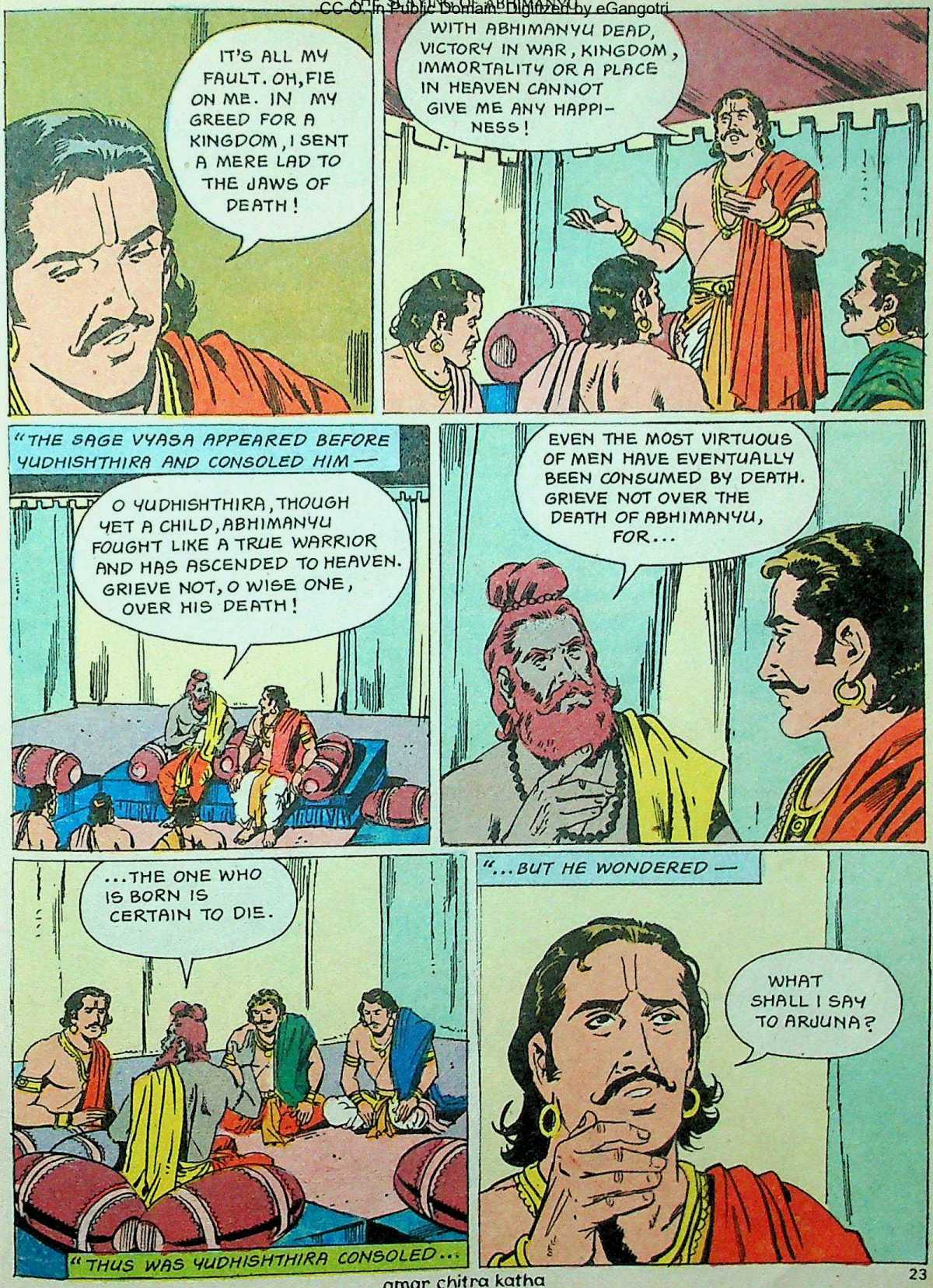

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"MEANWHILE, ARJUNA ON HIS RETURN FROM THE WAR WITH THE SAMSHAPTAKAS SAID TO KRISHNA ...

O KRISHNA! I SEE ILL OMENS. MY HEART BEATS FASTER, MY VOICE QUAVERS AND MY BODY GOES LIMP, I WONDER...

A NAMELESS ANXIETY GRIPS ME, O KESHAVA. I HOPE MY BROTHER, KING YUDHISHTHIRA, IS WELL.

"KRISHNA CONSOLED ARJUNA AND STEERED THE CHARIOT TOWARDS THE CAMP.

"AS THEY ENTERED THE CAMP, ARJUNA WAS SHOCKED BY THE SILENCE THAT GREETED HIM. HE ASKED KRISHNA —

WHY ARE THE INSTRUMENTS NOT PLAYING AUSPICIOUS MUSIC TODAY? WHY DO MY SOLDIERS TURN THEIR FACES AWAY?

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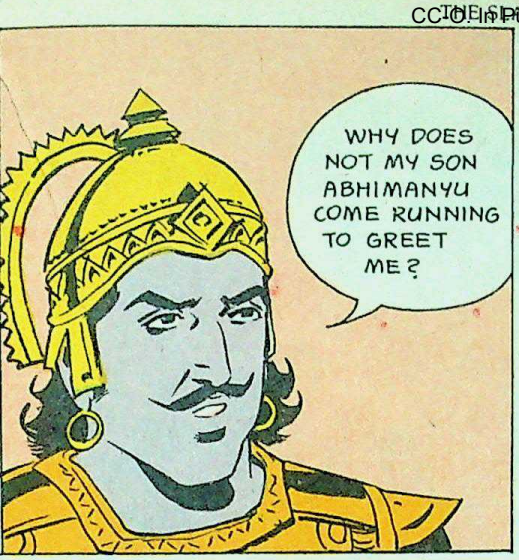

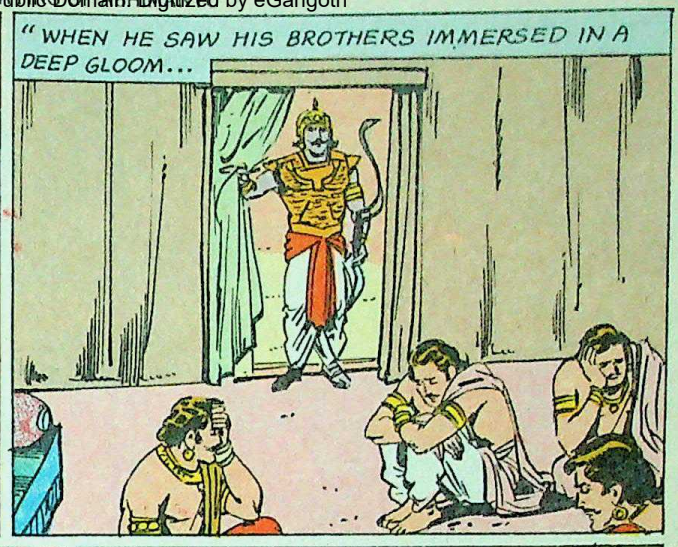

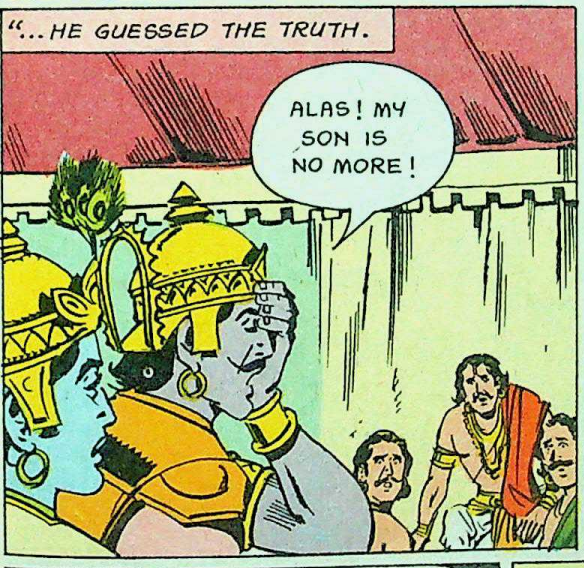

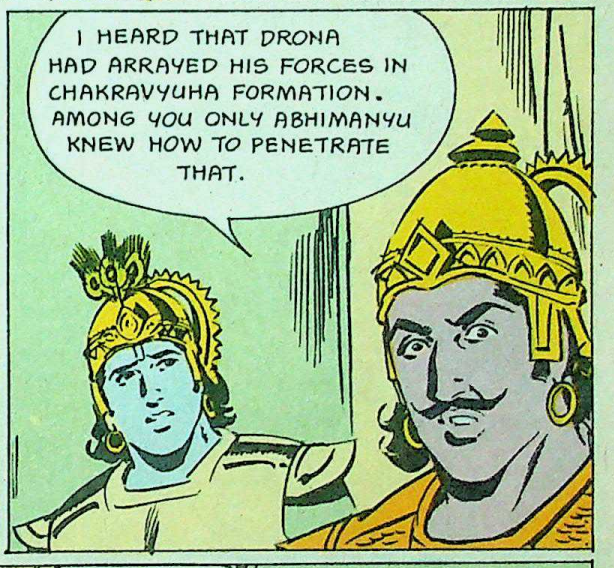

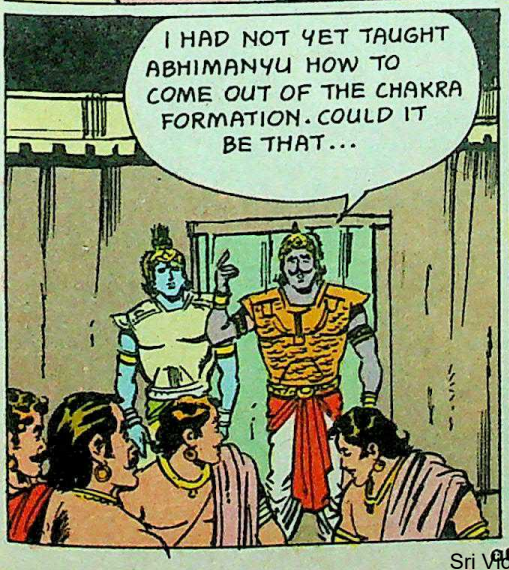

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"...FINALLY YUDHISHTHIRA WHOSE HEART BRIMMED WITH LOVE AND RESPECT FOR ARJUNA, SPOKE —

O ARJUNA, TORMENTED BY DRONA, WHO WANTED TO TAKE ME CAPTIVE, WE REQUESTED ABHIMANYU TO BREAK THROUGH THE CHARAVYUHA. THAT COURAGEOUS HERO AGREED.

"AND YUDHISHTHIRA NARRATED HOW JAYADRATHA, WITH THE ASSURANCE OF THE BOON GIVEN BY SHIVA, RESTRAINED THE PANDAVAS FROM GOING TO THE HELP OF ABHIMANYU.

AND THE SIX MAHARATHIS PUT ABHIMANYU TO DEATH. SINCE THEN, O ARJUNA, WE HAVE BEEN STRICKEN BY GRIEF.

AH MY SON!

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"SOON HE RECOVERED. TREMBLING IN INDIGNATION, HE ANNOUNCED.

I WILL KILL JAYADRATHA TOMORROW.

ANYONE WHO DARES TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA SHALL DIE AT MY HANDS.

"AND THEN —

IF I FAIL TO KILL JAYADRATHA BY SUNDOWN TOMORROW, I WILL CONSIGN MYSELF TO FLAMES.

O KING, ANGERED BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON, ARJUNA THUS TOOK THE VOW TO KILL JAYADRATHA BEFORE SUNDOWN NEXT DAY.

"THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA MAHABHARATA.

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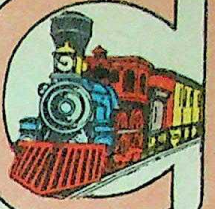

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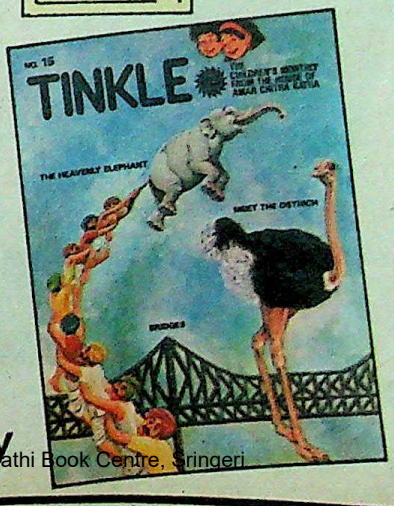

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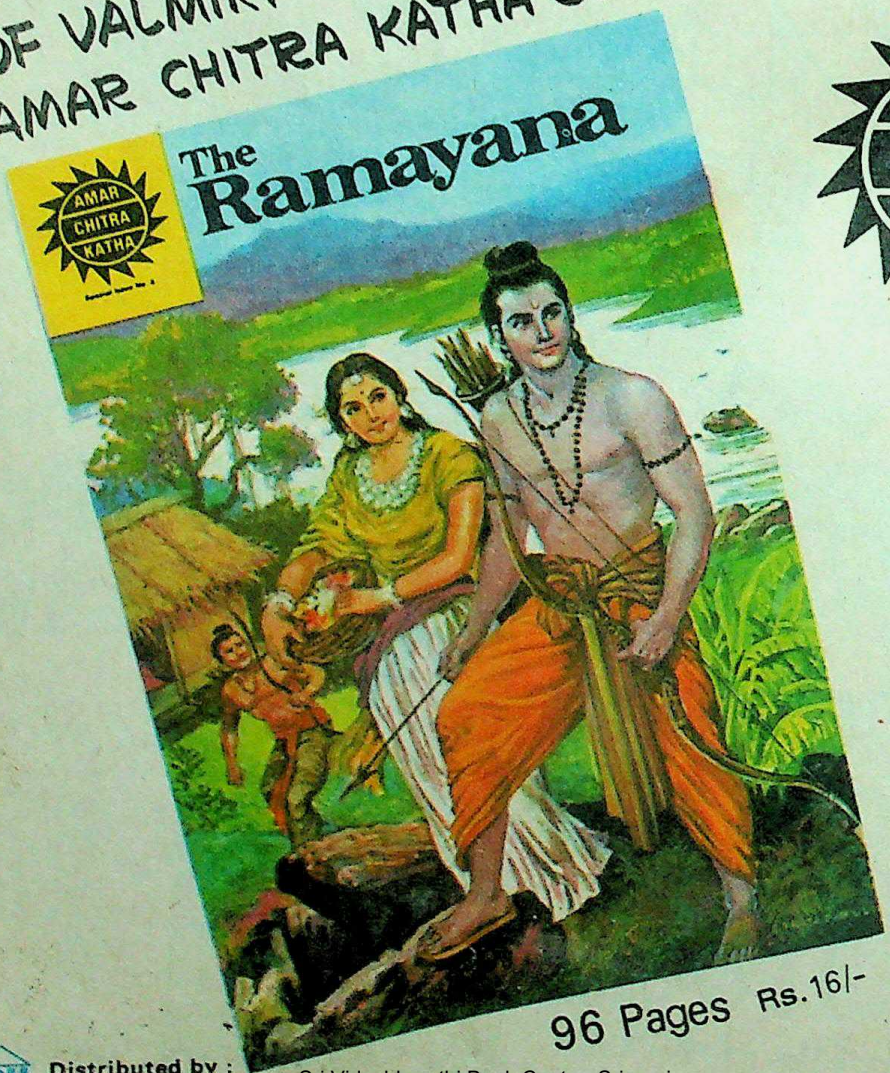

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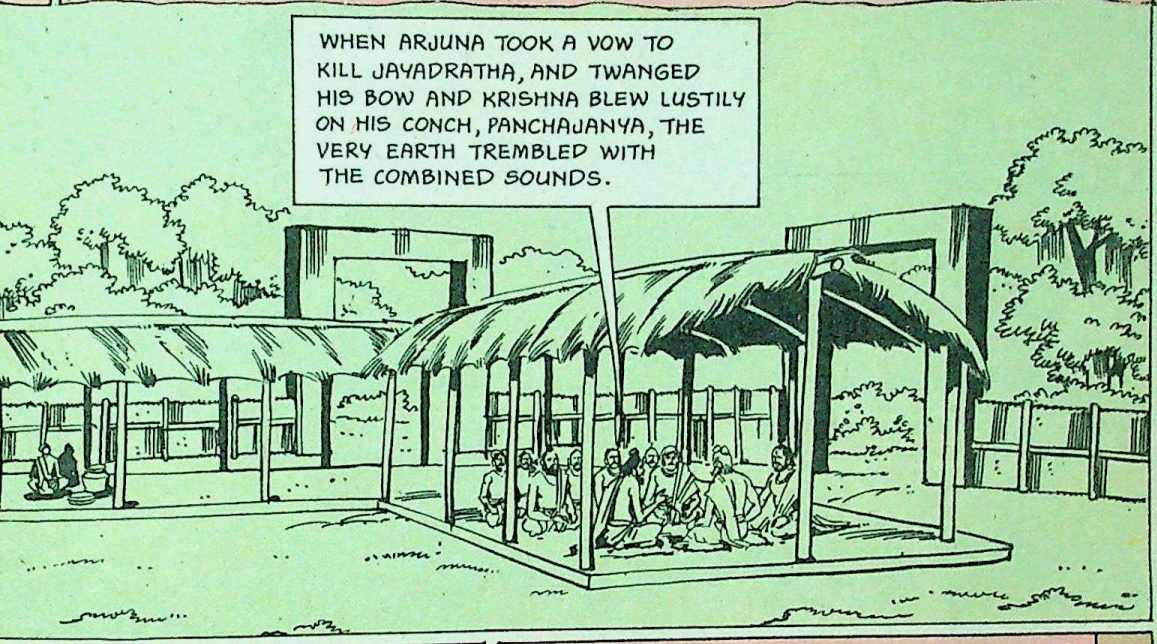
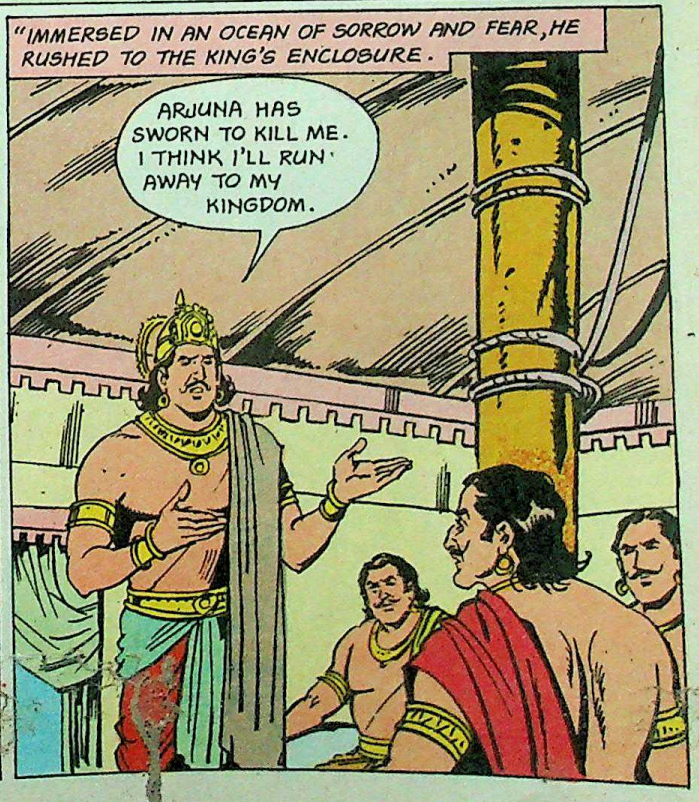
Mahabharata – 35

ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW





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YOU, THE BRAVEST OF KSHATRIYAS, CAN MATCH ARJUNA IN WARFARE. DURYODHANA, ONLY YOU CAN PROTECT ME FROM ARJUNA'S VOW.

MEANWHILE, JAYADRATHA WAVERED BETWEEN SEEKING HELP AND JUST RUNNING AWAY.

AH! BUT WHO CAN CHANGE ARJUNA'S OATH. I SHALL JUST DISAPPEAR FROM HERE.

FEAR NOT. WHO CAN DARE TO KILL YOU WHILE YOU ARE AMIDST BRAVE KSHATRIYAS?

"RECITING THE NAMES OF KAURAVA WARRIORS, DURYODHANA SAID:

I WILL GUARD YOU. BESIDES, THERE ARE HEROES LIKE KARNA, CHITRASENA, DUHSHASANA, AND SEVERAL OTHERS WHO, ALONG WITH THEIR ARMIES, WILL PROTECT YOU. SO, CASTE OFF THIS FEAR!

YOU ARE YOURSELF A GREAT WARRIOR AND MY ELEVEN AKSHAUHINIS* WILL STRIVE HARD TO PROTECT YOU.

"THEN BOTH OF THEM WENT TO DRONA.

TELL ME, GURUDEV, HOW DO I COMPARE WITH ARJUNA IN MY AIM, RANGE, SPEED AND NIMBLENESS IN SHOOTING AN ARROW?

I HAVE TAUGHT YOU BOTH EQUALLY WELL, BUT THE POSSESSION OF CELESTIAL WEAPONS, CONSTANT PRACTICE AND HIS ENDURANCE GIVES ARJUNA AN EDGE OVER YOU.

YET THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR YOU TO FEAR ARJUNA WHILE I PROTECT YOU. SUCH A FORMIDABLE VYUHA** SHALL I BUILD THAT EVEN ARJUNA WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BREAK THROUGH.

* A COMPLETE DIVISION CONSISTING OF 21870 CHARIOTS, 65610 CAVALRY AND 109350 INFANTRY. ** ARMY FORMATION

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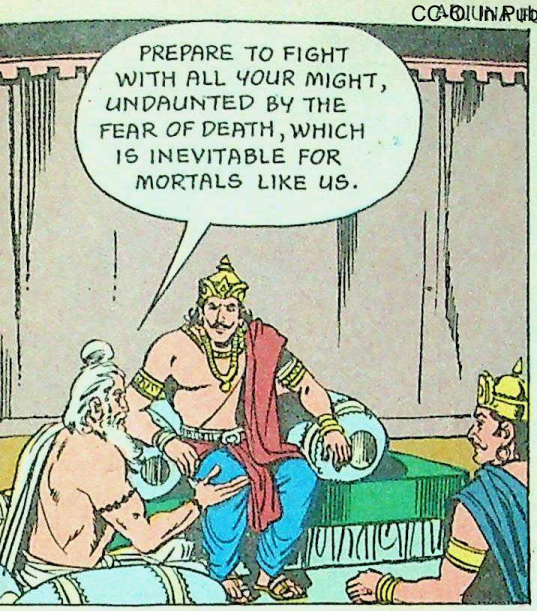

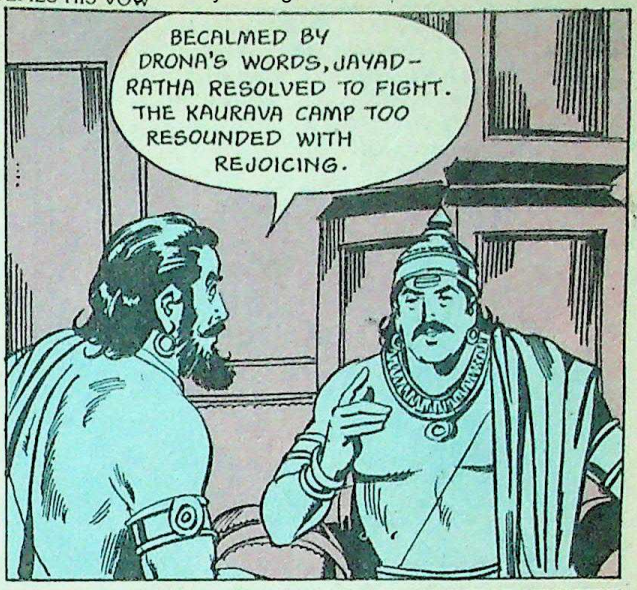

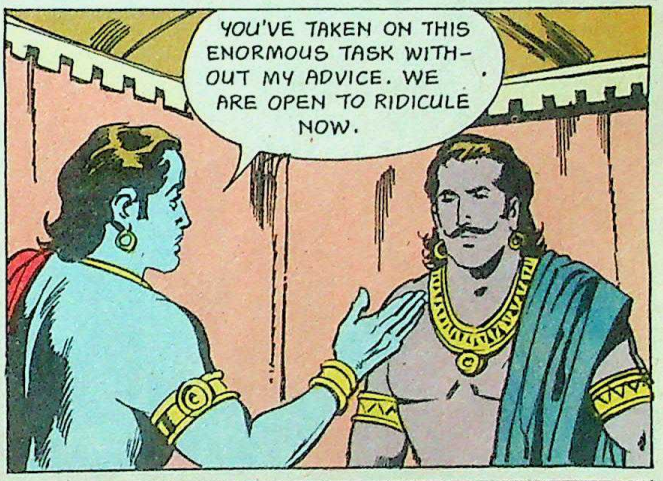

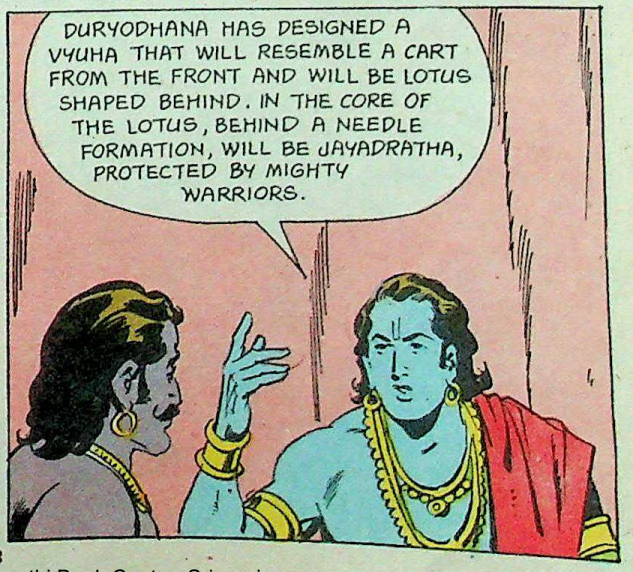

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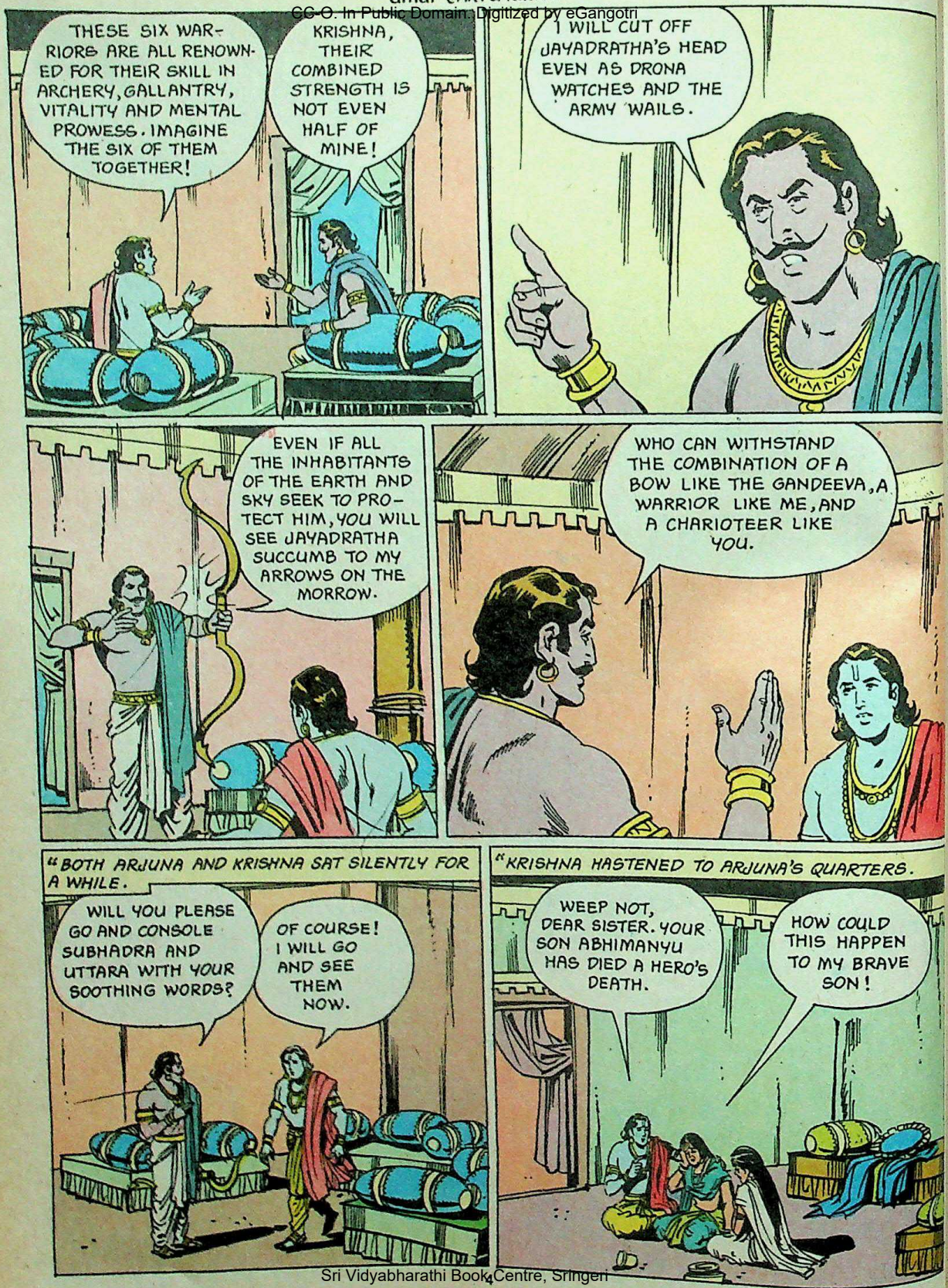

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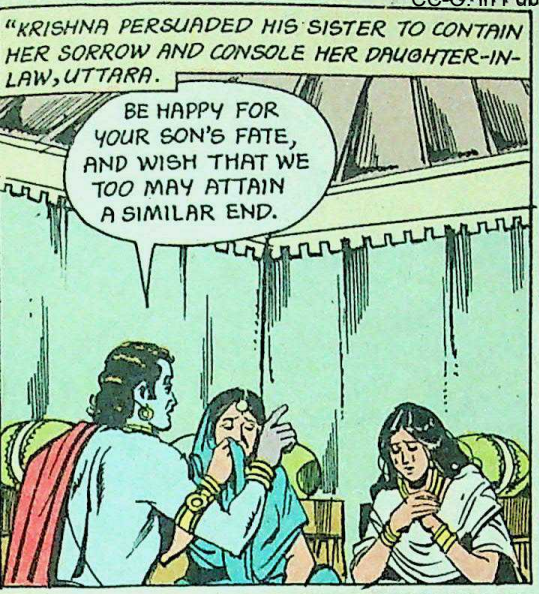

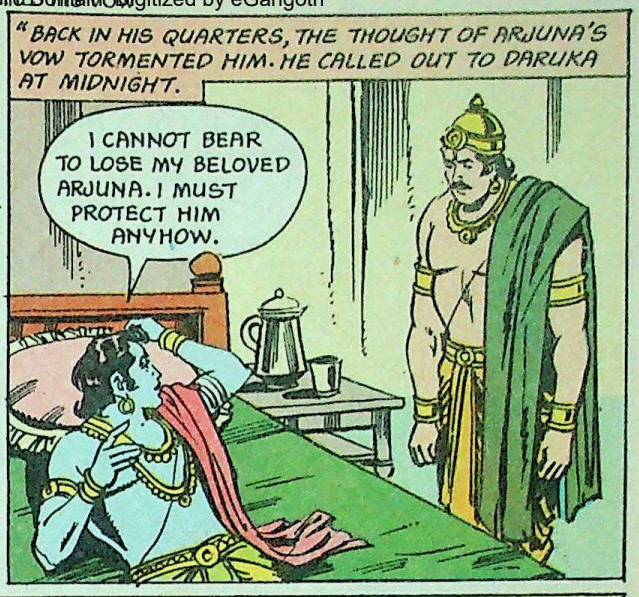

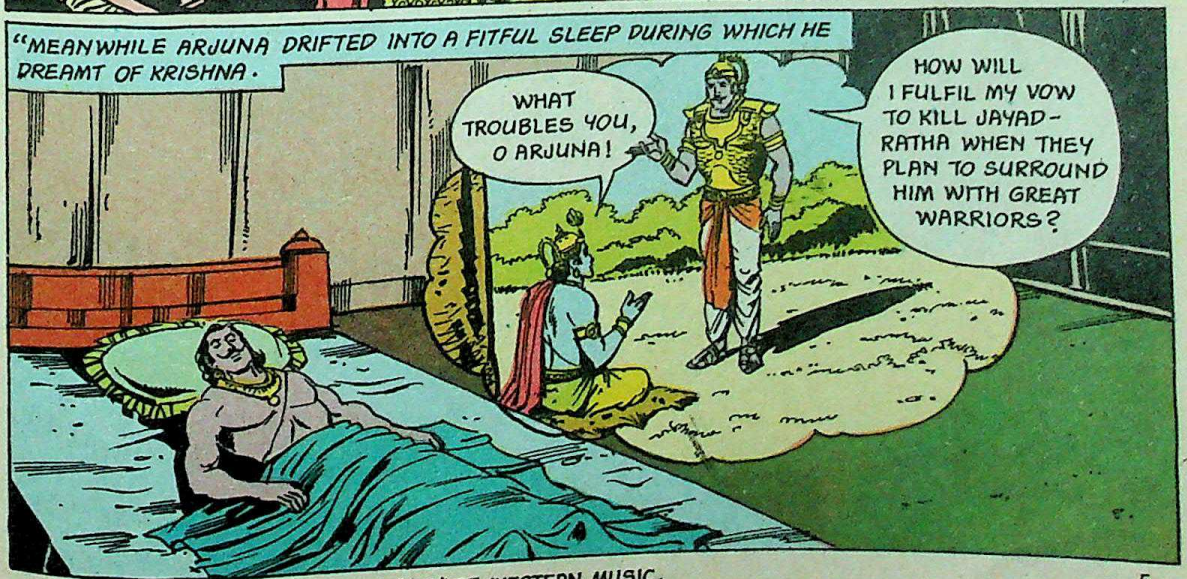

* CORRESPONDING TO THE NOTE "RE" OF WESTERN MUSIC.

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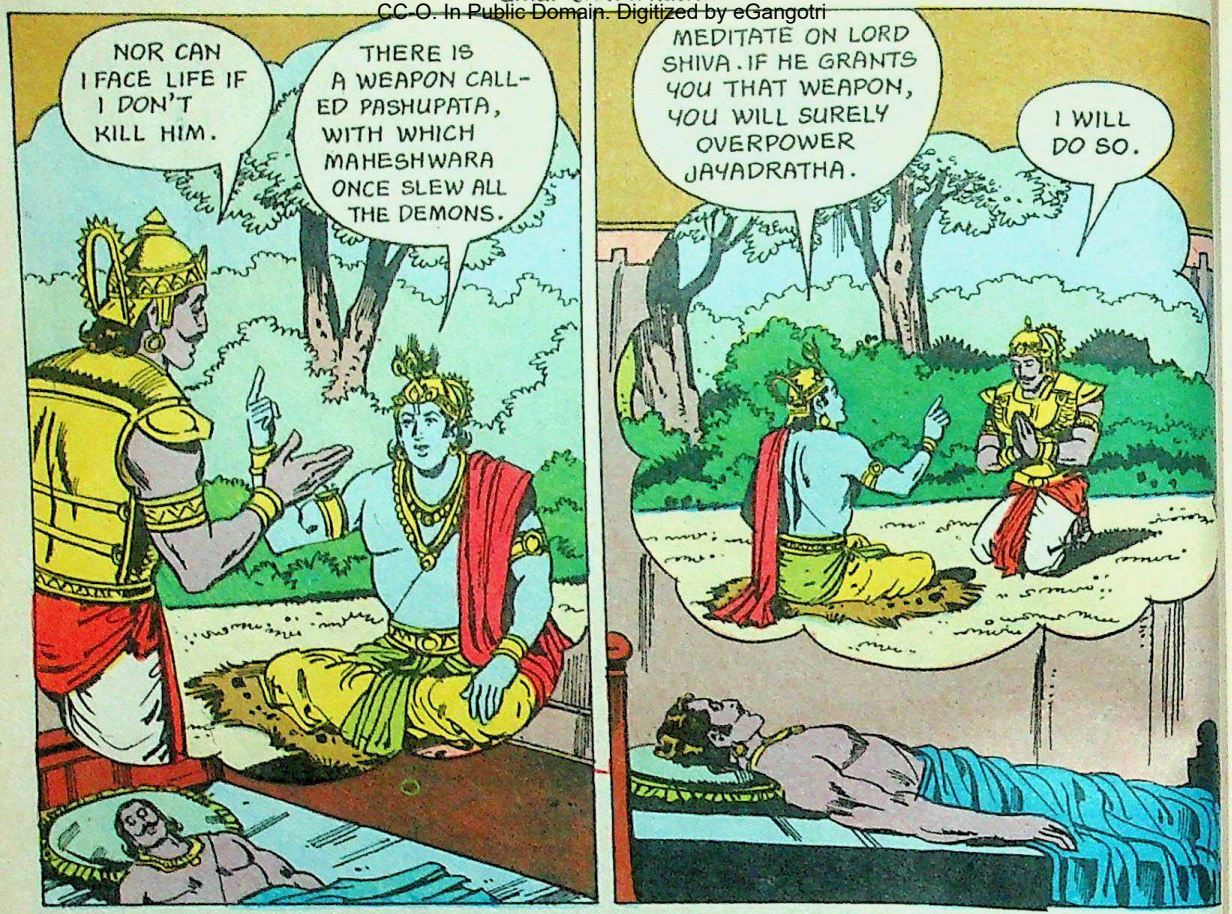

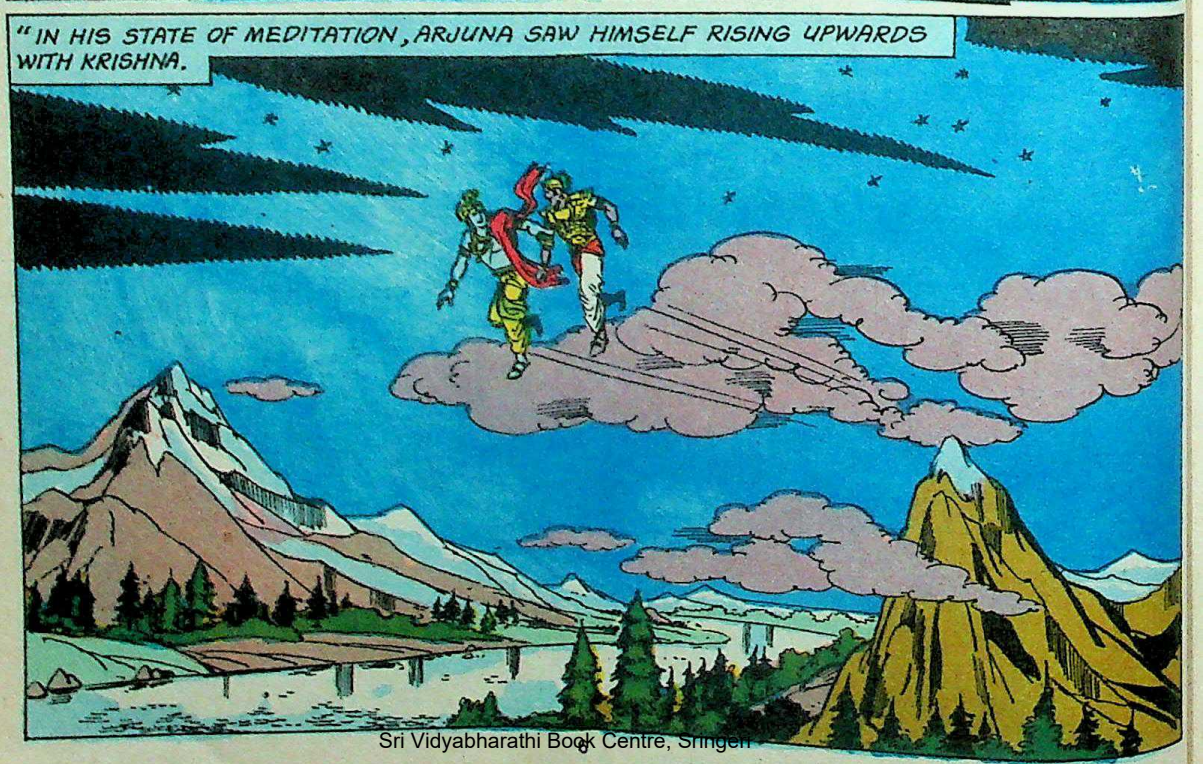

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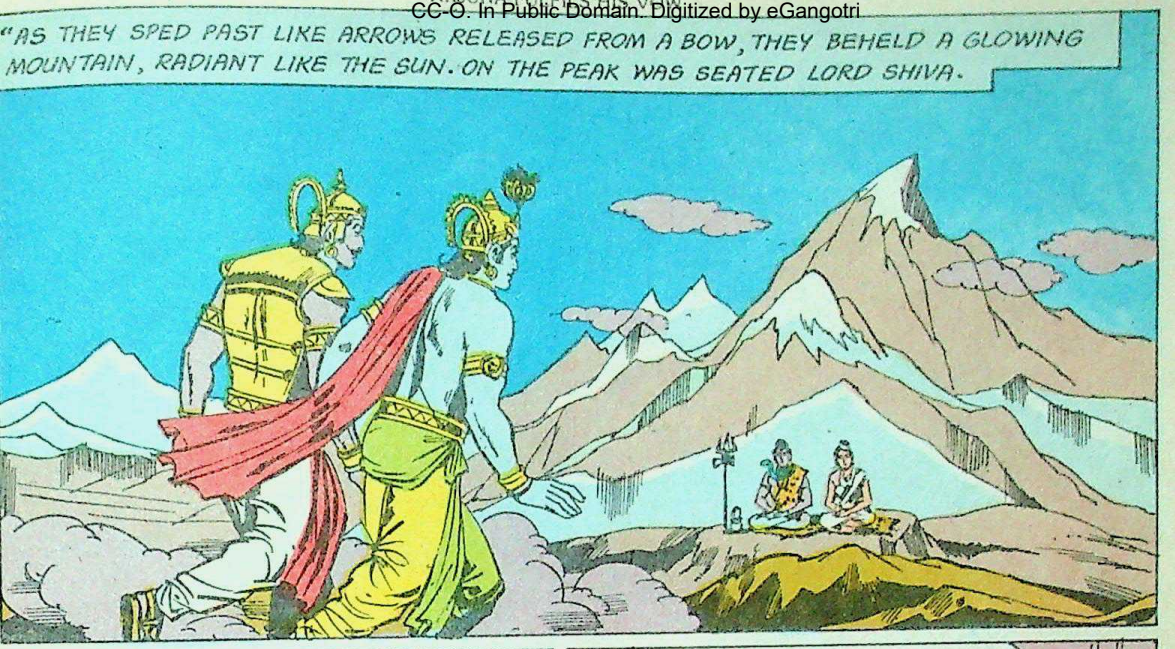

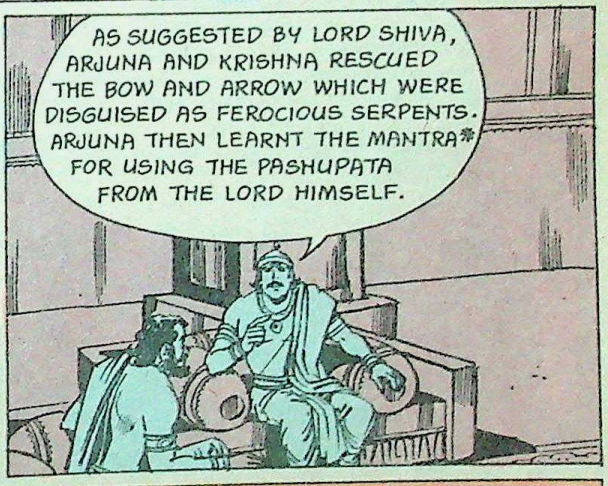

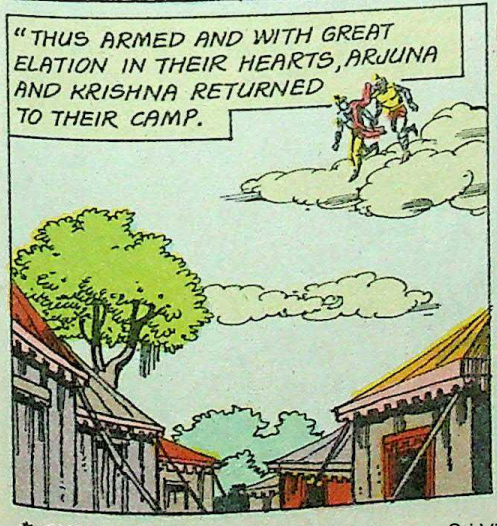

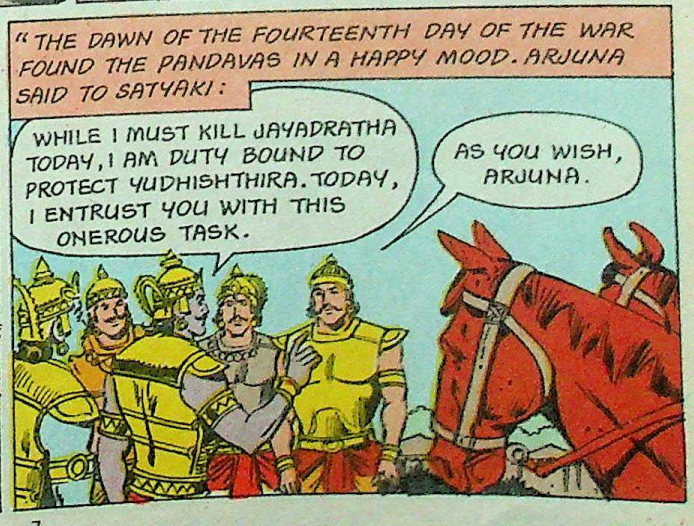

* CHANT

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"MEANWHILE AT DAYBREAK, DRONA ARRAYED HIS TROOPS IN A COMPLEX FORMATION.

ALONG WITH SIX MIGHTY WARRIORS, ONE LAKH CAVALRY, SIXTY THOUSAND CHARIOTS, FOURTEEN THOUSAND ELEPHANTS AND TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND INFANTRY, POSITION YOURSELF AT A DISTANCE OF SIX KOSA** FROM ME, O, JAYADRATHA!

"THE TRIPLE FORMATION WAS QUITE FORMIDABLE WITH DRONA GUARDING THE LOTUS FORMATION AND DURMARSHANA STATIONED IN FRONT OF THE SHAKATAVYUHA*. JUST THEN ARJUNA ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.

LEAD ME, O KRISHNA TO DURMARSHANA.

"LIKE A STRONG GALE SCATTERING CLOUDS, ARJUNA'S ARROWS DESTROYED DURMARSHANA'S FORCES. AN ENRAGED DUHSHASANA THEN CONFRONTED ARJUNA.

"SUCH WAS ARJUNA'S SPEED THAT NO ONE COULD MAKE OUT WHEN HE PLACED HIS ARROW, WHEN HE PULLED THE BOWSTRING AND WHEN HE RELEASED THE ARROW. THUS TORTURED, DUHSHASANA RAN FOR PROTECTION TO DRONA.

* CART-FORMATION ** ABOUT 2 MILES (3·2 km.)

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"HAVING BROKEN THROUGH THE CART FORMATION, ARJUNA SWIFTLY REACHED THE LOTUS FORMATION GUARDED BY DRONA.

BLESS ME, THAT I MAY FULFIL MY VOW. I MUST AVENGE THE DEATH OF MY SON.

BUT TO DO SO, YOU MUST FIRST DEFEAT ME.

"DETERMINED TO GUARD HIS FORMATION, DRONA DISCHARGED A SHOWER OF ARROWS AT ARJUNA.

"AN EQUALLY DETERMINED ARJUNA FOUGHT BACK. A FURIOUS BATTLE ENSUED.

"KRISHNA REALISED THAT THIS BATTLE WOULD TAKE TOO LONG. HE CAUTIONED ARJUNA —

WE CANNOT TARRY HERE ANY MORE. LET US PROCEED ONWARD.

YOU ARE RIGHT. DO WHAT YOU THINK FIT.

"KRISHNA DEFTLY TOOK THE CHARIOT AROUND DRONA AND RACED PAST HIM.

ARJUNA! NEVER BEFORE HAVE YOU GONE WITHOUT DEFEATING YOUR ENEMY.

YOU ARE MY GURU, NOT MY ENEMY.

ANXIOUS TO REACH JAYADRATHA, ARJUNA PIERCED THROUGH THE KAURAVA FORCES, ABLY REPELLING THE CHALLENGES OF MANY MIGHTY WARRIORS. SEEING THE SOLDIERS SCATTER HITHER-THITHER, YOUR SON DURYODHANA RUSHED TO DRONA.

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ARJUNA HAS MANAGED TO CRUSH OUR FORCES AND PIERCE THROUGH THE COMPLEX FORMATION. WHY! HE EVEN PASSED YOU BY. SURELY THE WARRIORS PROTECTING JAYADRATHA WILL LOSE HEART NOW...

EXTREME DISTRESS AT THE STATE OF HIS ARMY MADE DURYODHANA RECKLESS IN HIS SPEECH.

...WE DO OUR BEST TO KEEP YOU HAPPY. YET YOU ARE BENT ON PLEASING THE PANDAVAS. HAD I KNOWN THAT YOU ARE LIKE A KNIFE CONCEALED IN A HONEYPOT, I WOULD HAVE LET JAYADRATHA GO HOME. DO SOMETHING NOW TO SAVE HIM.

I FORGIVE YOUR OUTBURST, LIKE A FATHER FORGIVES HIS SON. BUT THE TRUTH IS ARJUNA IS TOO FAST FOR ME NOW THAT I AM GETTING OLD.

BESIDES, THIS IS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO FULFIL MY VOW OF KILLING YUDHISHTHIRA, UNPROTECTED AS HE IS WITHOUT ARJUNA. GO FORTH AND CONFRONT ARJUNA.

YOU EXPECT ME TO CONQUER ARJUNA, WHO GOT PAST AN ACE WARRIOR LIKE YOU?

I WILL TIE A GOLDEN ARMOUR ON YOU WHICH WILL BE IMPENETRABLE TO ALL WEAPONS. WITH IT, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO CONFRONT EVEN ARJUNA.

"MEANWHILE THE PANDAVA ARMY LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON DRONA'S TROOPS. A FEARSOME BATTLE TOOK PLACE BETWEEN DRONA AND DHRISHTADYUMNA, WHO HAD JUMPED FROM HIS CHARIOT ONTO DRONA'S HORSES.

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"SATYAKI INTERVENED IN TIME TO SAVE DHRISHTADYUMNA'S LIFE. HE BROKE DRONA'S BOW.

"NO SOONER DID DRONA TAKE UP A NEW BOW, THAN SATYAKI MANAGED TO CUT ITS STRING WITH HIS ARROW.

SATYAKI IS DISPLAYING EXCEPTIONAL VALOUR TODAY. HE SEEMS TO EQUAL BHEESHMA AND ARJUNA.

"SATYAKI MATCHED DRONA'S ONSLAUGHT. SOON, YUDHISHTHIRA, BHEEMA, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA CAME TO HIS HELP AND THE DUEL TURNED TO A GENERAL FIGHT.

"MEANWHILE, ARJUNA WAS SPEEDING TOWARDS JAYADRATHA, CONFRONTING AND QUELLING ALL WHO CAME IN HIS WAY.

MY HORSES ARE WOUNDED AND WEARY AND JAYADRATHA IS STILL FAR AWAY. WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?

YES, WE MUST REST THE HORSES AWHILE.

"ARJUNA LEAPT OUT OF THE CHARIOT AND BEGAN TO FIGHT ON FOOT. THE KAURAVAS THOUGHT THIS WAS AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO OVERCOME ARJUNA AND ATTACKED HIM FROM ALL SIDES. BUT ARJUNA, ON FOOT, WAS AS SWIFT AS HE WAS ON HIS CHARIOT.

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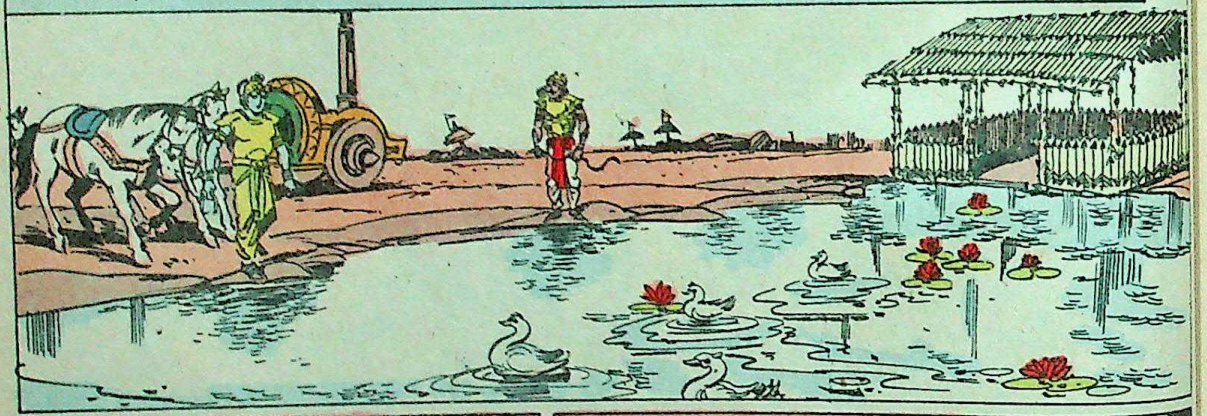
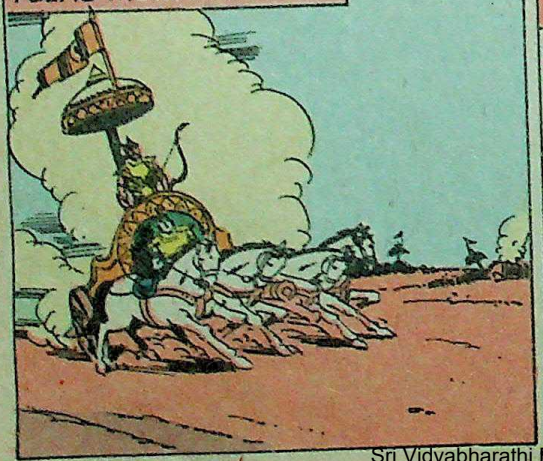
"KRISHNA, WHO WAS SOOTHING THE HORSES AND REMOVING THE ARROWS FROM THEIR BODIES, SAID TO ARJUNA :

"AS SOON AS HIS ARROW STRUCK THE GROUND, THERE APPEARED A PLACID POOL, WITH BEAUTIFUL LOTUSES AND WATERBIRDS ENHANCING THE VIEW. BESIDES IT, WAS A COTTAGE MADE ENTIRELY OF ARROWS TO WHICH KRISHNA LED THE HORSES. SAFE IN ITS CONFINES, HE REMOVED THEIR ARROWS, MASSAGED THEM AND QUENCHED THEIR THIRST.



"KRISHNA THEN YOKED THE HORSES BACK TO THE CHARIOT AND RUSHED TO FULFIL THEIR MISSION.



"DURYODHANA CHASED THEM, IN THE HOPE OF SAVING JAYADRATHA, AND SOON OVERTOOK THEM.

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"HEARING KRISHNA AND ARJUNA ROAR WITH JOY, THE HEARTS OF KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE FILLED WITH FOREBODING.

OUR KING IS DEAD.

DURYODHANA IS KILLED!

"DURYODHANA QUICKLY REASSURED HIS MEN AND CLAIMED THAT HE WOULD IN FACT KILL HIS ADVERSARIES.

COME, PARTHA! TRY ALL YOUR CELESTIAL AND EARTHLY WEAPONS ON ME.

"EVEN AS HE CHALLENGED ARJUNA, DURYODHANA HURLED TEN ARROWS AT KRISHNA'S CHEST AND SEVERAL OTHERS AT ARJUNA. ARJUNA THEN AIMED HIS POWERFUL ARROWS AT DURYODHANA, BUT...

THIS IS STRANGE INDEED, ARJUNA, YOUR ARROWS ARE JUST SLIDING OFF FROM HIS BODY INSTEAD OF PIERCING IT.

I BELIEVE DRONA HAS TIED ON AN IMPENETRABLE ARMOUR ON DURYODHANA. IT WILL RESIST ALL WEAPONS. NEVERTHELESS, TODAY YOU SHALL SEE ME DEFEAT DURYODHANA.

"...WITH HIS WELL-AIMED ARROWS, ARJUNA SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROYED DURYODHANA'S HORSES, THEN HIS CHARIOTEER AND FINALLY THE CHARIOT ITSELF.

"CLEVERLY, HE AIMED HIS ARROWS UNDER DURYODHANA'S NAILS. UNABLE TO BEAR THE PAIN, DURYODHANA TOOK TO HIS HEELS.

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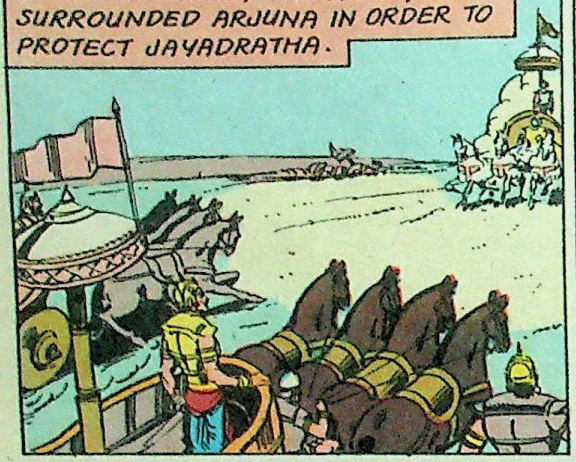
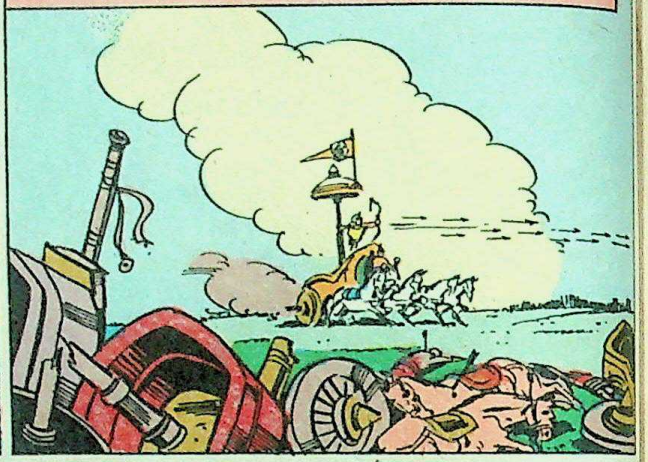
"BUT SOON HE RETURNED, ACCOMPANIED BY EIGHT MIGHTY WARRIORS, AND SURROUNDED ARJUNA IN ORDER TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA.



"BUT ARJUNA PROVED MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THEM, AND DISPELLED THEIR FORCES.



"MEANWHILE, YUDHISHTHIRA BECAME APPREHENSIVE AT HEARING THE SOUND FROM THE KAURAVA ARMY. HE SAID TO SATYAKI —

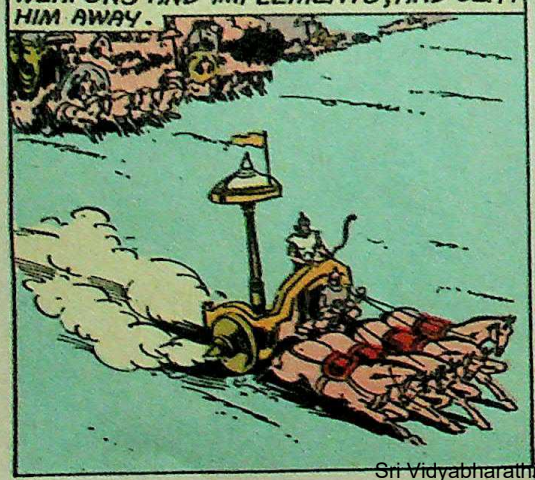
ARJUNA, YOUR GURU AND TEACHER APPEARS TO BE IN TROUBLE. YOU MUST GO TO HIS AID.

BUT I CANNOT! ARJUNA HAS ENTRUSTED ME TO GUARD OVER YOU TODAY.

HE HAS LEFT YOU IN MY CARE. I CANNOT LEAVE YOU UNLESS I AM ASSURED OF YOUR PROTECTION.

GO TO ARJUNA. BHEEMA AND THE OTHER BROTHERS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PROTECT ME.

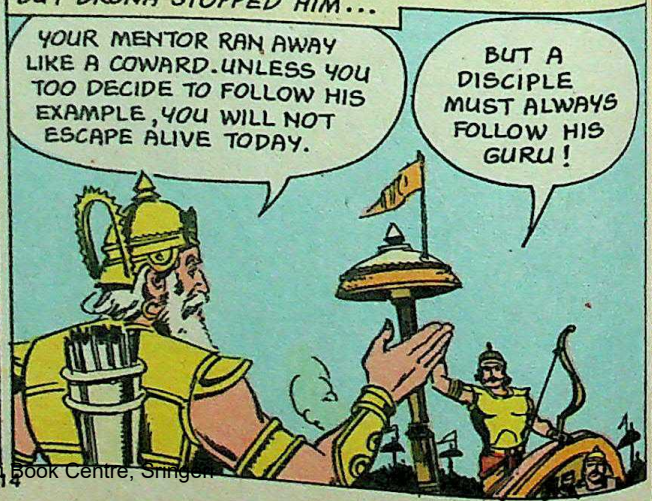
"YUDHISHTHIRA ARRANGED FOR SATYAKI'S CHARIOT TO BE LOADED WITH WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENTS, AND SENT HIM AWAY.



"SATYAKI THEN FORCED HIS WAY THROUGH THE KAURAVA FORMATION, TRYING TO FOLLOW ARJUNA. BUT DRONA STOPPED HIM...

YOUR MENTOR RAN AWAY LIKE A COWARD. UNLESS YOU TOO DECIDE TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE, YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE ALIVE TODAY.

BUT A DISCIPLE MUST ALWAYS FOLLOW HIS GURU!



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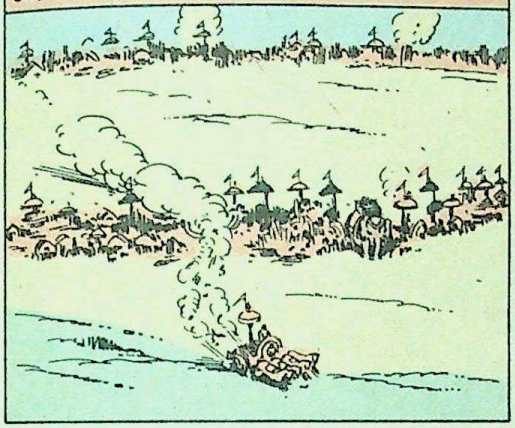
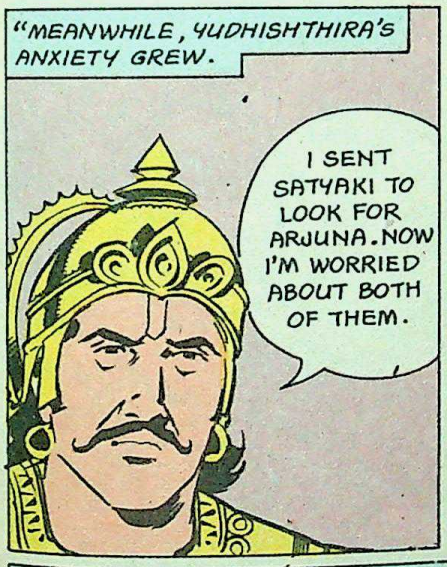
"REALISING THAT DRONA WOULD FOLLOW HIM, SATYAKI DEFTLY GUIDED HIS CHARIOTEER TO MAKE A WAY THROUGH THE VARIOUS ARMIES, CONSTITUTING THE KAURAVA FORCE.

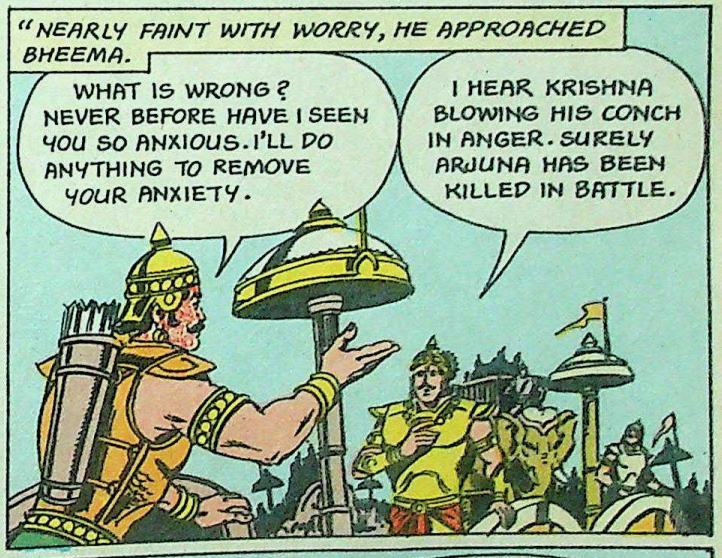


"WHOEVER CAME IN HIS PATH, WAS RUTHLESSLY ATTACKED.

"MEANWHILE, YUDHISHTHIRA'S ANXIETY GREW.



"NEARLY FAINT WITH WORRY, HE APPROACHED BHEEMA.



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"BHEEMA TOO LEFT, LEAVING YUDHISHTHIRA IN DHRISHTADYUMNA'S CARE —

YOU KNOW THAT DRONA WILL TRY ANYTHING TO CAPTURE YUDHISHTHIRA. PROTECTING HIM IS NOW YOUR TASK FOR THE DAY.

I WILL DO AS YOU WISH.

O KING! ON HIS WAY, BHEEMA WAS ACCOSTED BY YOUR SONS, BUT HE CROSSED THEIR PATH AND FELL UPON DRONA'S ARMY.

"EXPECTING BHEEMA TO PAY HIS RESPECTS BEFORE PROCEEDING, DRONA SAID —

WITH MY CONSENT, YOUR BROTHER, ARJUNA PENETRATED THE FORMATION. YOU MAY ALSO DO SO.

ARJUNA DOESN'T NEED YOUR CONSENT THOUGH HE MAY HAVE INDEED SHOWN DUE RESPECT TO YOU.

BUT I AM NOT LIKE THE KIND-HEARTED ARJUNA. I AM BHEEMASENA —YOUR ENEMY!

"BHEEMA LIFTED HIS MACE AND TWIRLED IT AT DRONA, WHO DEFTLY JUMPED OUT OF HIS CHARIOT.

"SEVERAL WARRIOR KINGS THEN RUSHED TO SURROUND BHEEMA, BUT HE BORE THEIR ATTACK LIKE A MIGHTY MOUNTAIN.

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"SIMILARLY, THOUGH KARNA REPEATEDLY MADE BHEEMA SWOON WITH HIS ARROWS, HE REMEMBERED HIS PROMISE TO KUNTI AND DID NOT KILL HIM.

"ARJUNA FINALLY DROVE KARNA AWAY WITH SNAKE-LIKE ARROWS, SHOT FROM HIS GANDEEVA.

"SEEING SATYAKI COMING TOWARDS THEM, KRISHNA SAID TO ARJUNA —

LOOK, PARTHA! HERE COMES THE FOLLOWER OF YOUR FOOTSTEPS, WHO IS BOTH A FRIEND AND A PUPIL TO YOU.

TODAY, SEEING HIM DOESN'T MAKE ME HAPPY. TODAY HE WAS TO PROTECT YUDHISHTHIRA.

"SEEING BHOORISHRAVA ATTACK SATYAKI, ARJUNA'S WORRY INCREASED.

I HAVE YET TO SLAY JAYADRATHA. BESIDES, I MUST PROTECT SATYAKI AND INQUIRE ABOUT YUDHISHTHIRA.

THE SUN IS ABOUT TO SET. I MUST ACT FAST.

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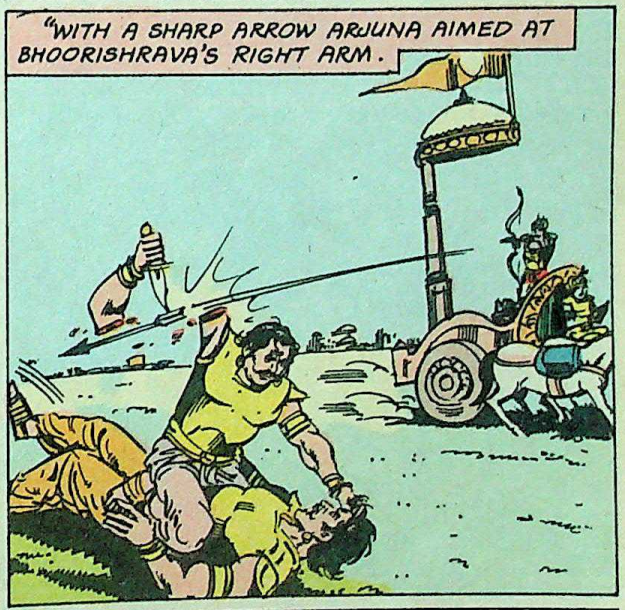
"THE FIGHT BETWEEN SATYAKI AND BHOORISHRAVA PROGRESSED FROM AN ARMED COMBAT TO BAREHAND WRESTLING.

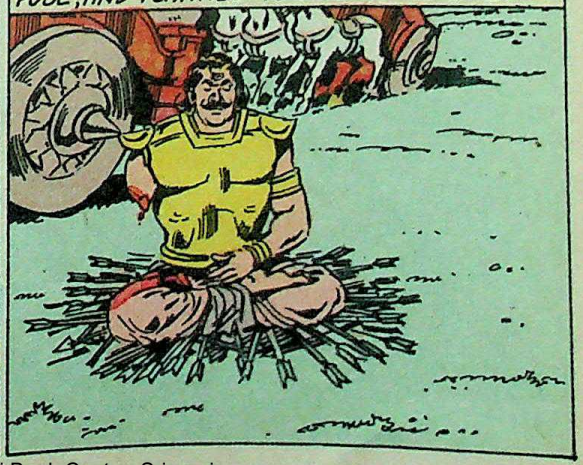
"WHEN BHOORISHRAVA YANKED SATYAKI'S HAIR, PUT HIS FOOT ON HIS CHEST AND WAS ABOUT TO CUT HIS HEAD OFF, KRISHNA BESEECHED ARJUNA—

"WITH A SHARP ARROW ARJUNA AIMED AT BHOORISHRAVA'S RIGHT ARM.



"BHOORISHRAVA WAS ENRAGED.

"REALISING HIS MISTAKE, BHOORISHRAVA MADE A SEAT OF ARROWS, TOOK UP A YOGIC POSE, AND PLANNED TO GIVE UP HIS LIFE.



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"MEANWHILE SATYAKI GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND ATTACKED BHOORISHRAVA.

"HIS ACTION MET WITH A SALVO OF CRITICISM FROM ALL SIDES.

THOSE OF YOU WHO FEEL I HAVE ACTED WRONGLY, HOW DO YOU JUDGE THE KILLING OF ABHIMANYU? I FEEL I DID RIGHT.

"AFTER BHOORISHRAVA WAS KILLED, ARJUNA SAID TO KRISHNA —

LEAD THE CHARIOT ONTO JAYADRATHA. BEHOLD HOW FAST THE SUN IS SETTING!

"SEEING THE PACE AT WHICH ARJUNA WAS APPROACHING JAYADRATHA, SEVERAL KAURAVA WARRIORS GOT READY TO REPEL HIM.

"DURYODHANA SAID TO KARNA —

THE DECISIVE HOUR IS NEAR, KARNA! IF HE CANNOT KILL JAYADRATHA BY SUN-DOWN, ARJUNA MUST HIMSELF DIE.

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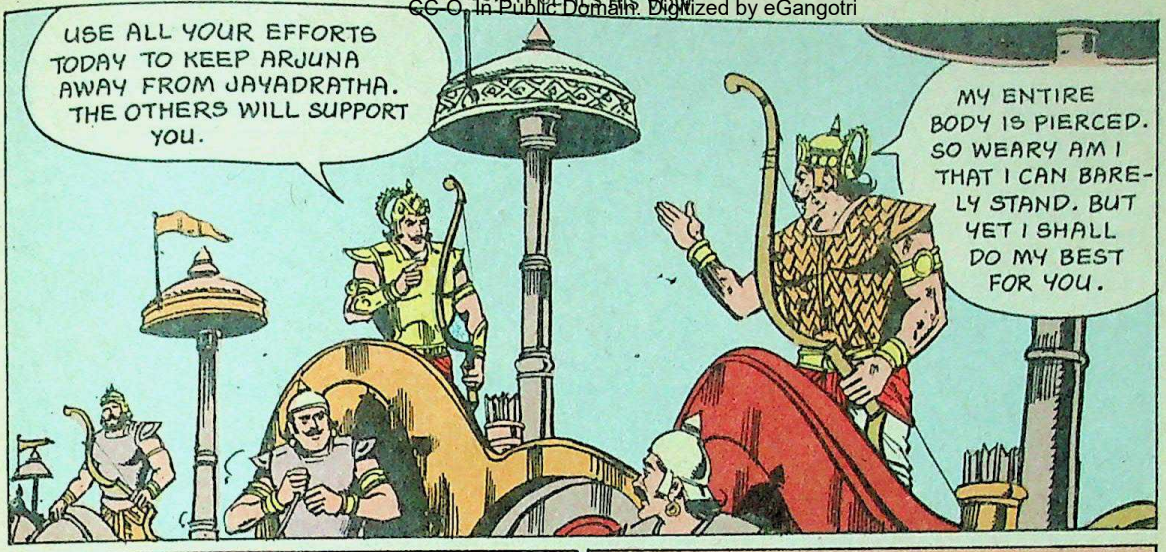

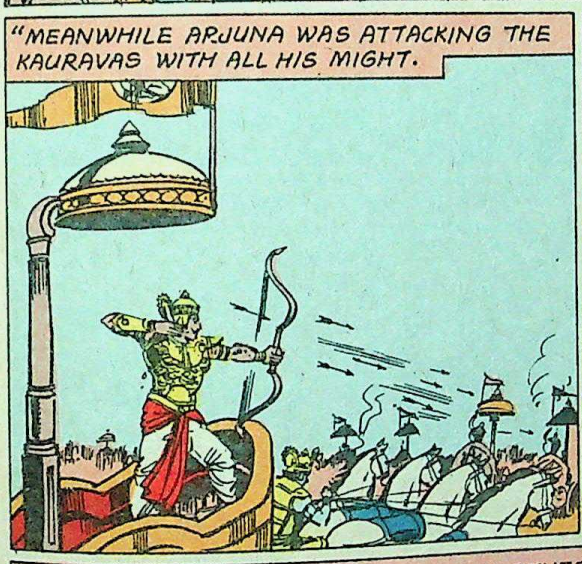

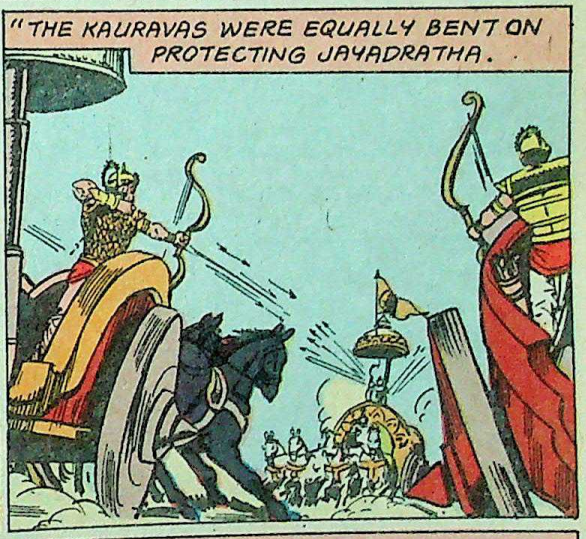

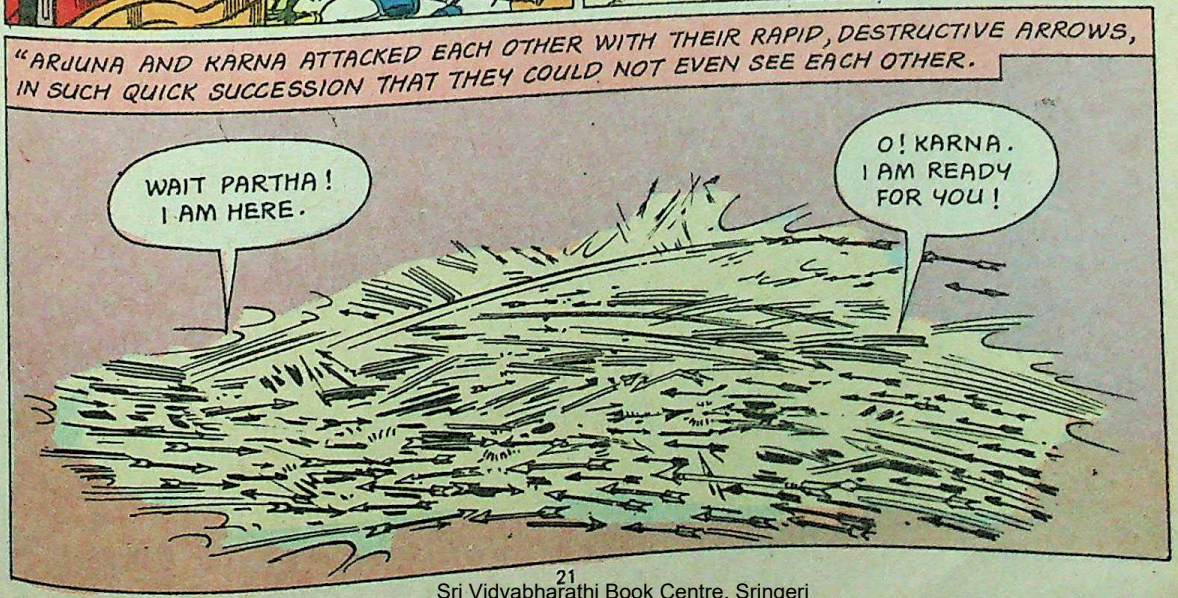

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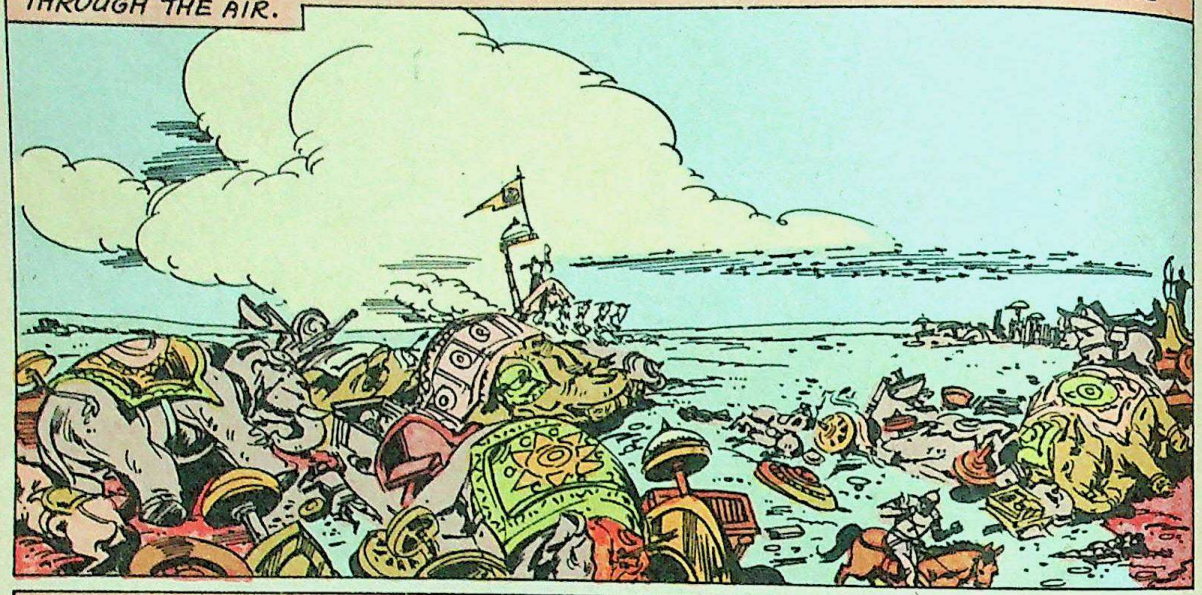
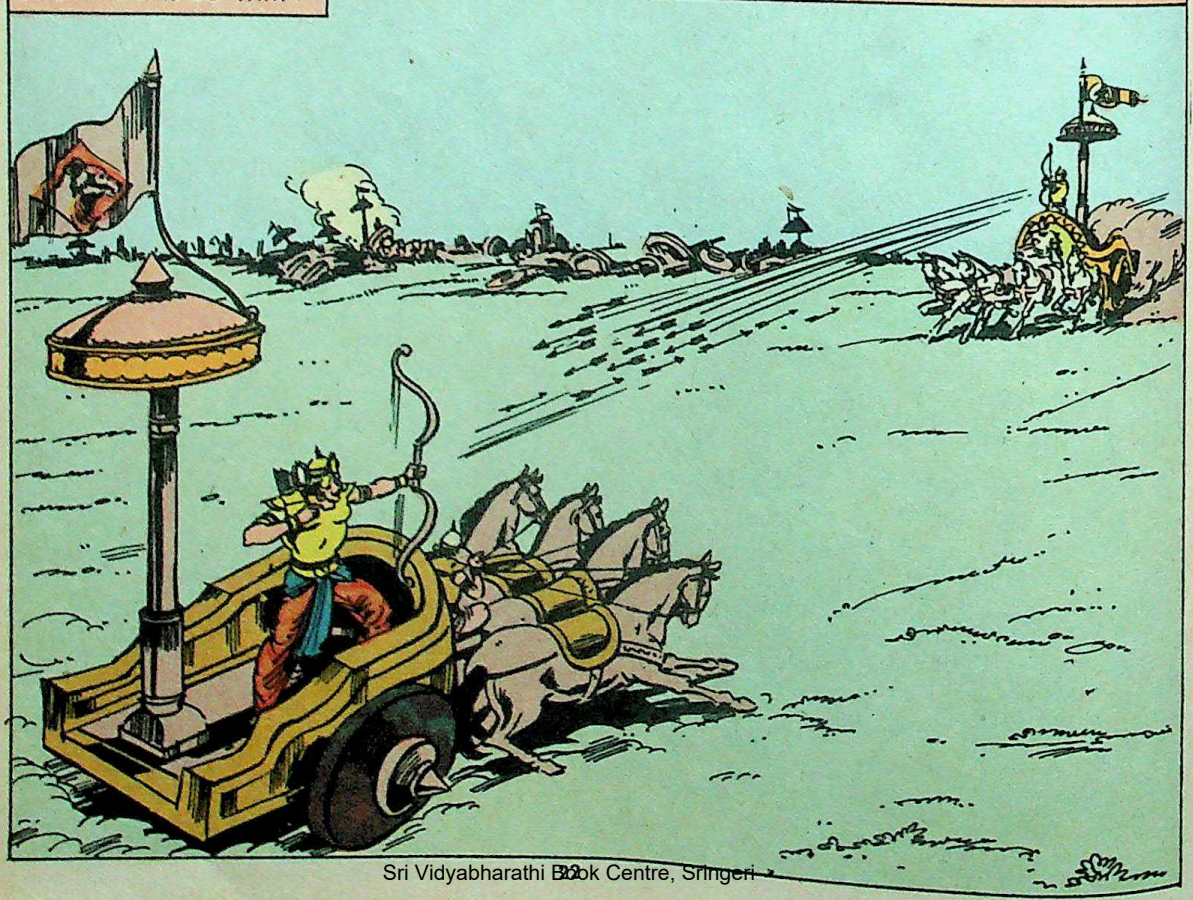
"THE BATTLEFIELD LAY STREWN WITH DEAD, HEADLESS, FALLEN ELEPHANTS, WRECKED CHARIOTS AND THOUSANDS OF WOUNDED SOLDIERS TREMBLING WITH PAIN. MAKING HIS WAY THROUGH ALL THIS, ARJUNA SPED TOWARDS JAYADRATHA. HIS ARROWS CAME IN SUCH QUICK SUCCESSION THAT THEY LOOKED LIKE A HUGE FLOCK OF SWANS FLYING THROUGH THE AIR.



"AS SOON AS HE REACHED WHERE JAYADRATHA WAS, HE SHOT 64 ARROWS AT HIM AND WOUNDED HIM.



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"INFURIATED, JAYADRATHA WOUNDED BOTH KRISHNA AND ARJUNA WITH HIS ARROWS AND ONE OF HIS ARROWS PIERCED THROUGH ARJUNA'S BANNER.

"ARJUNA BEHEADED JAYADRATHA'S CHARIOTEER AND WITH ANOTHER ARROW BROUGHT DOWN JAYADRATHA'S BANNER AS WELL AS THE POST.

"SEEING THE COURSE OF THE SUN IN THE WEST, KRISHNA TOLD ARJUNA —

JAYADRATHA IS PROTECTED BY SIX WARRIORS YOU MUST KILL THEM FIRST.

USING MY YOGIC POWERS, I WILL CREATE AN ILLUSION SO THAT JAYADRATHA ALONE WILL SEE THE SUN SETTING.

CONSIDERING HIMSELF SAFE AFTER SUNSET, HE WILL EXPOSE HIMSELF.

AT THAT OPPORTUNE MOMENT, ATTACK AND KILL HIM. DON'T BE DISMAYED IF THE SUN APPEARS TO HAVE SET.

AS YOU WISH, OH LORD!

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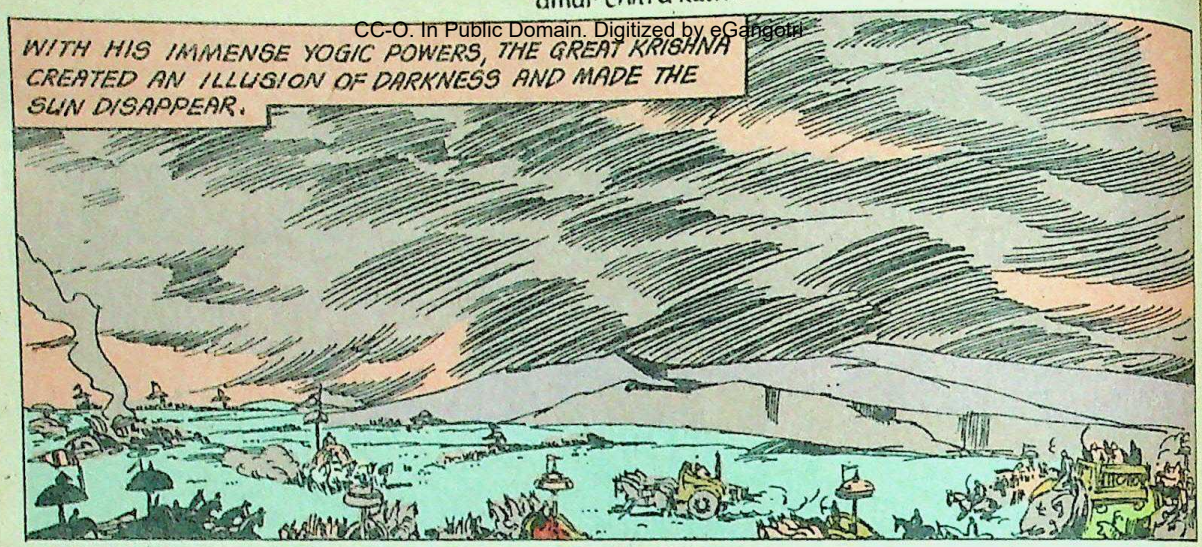

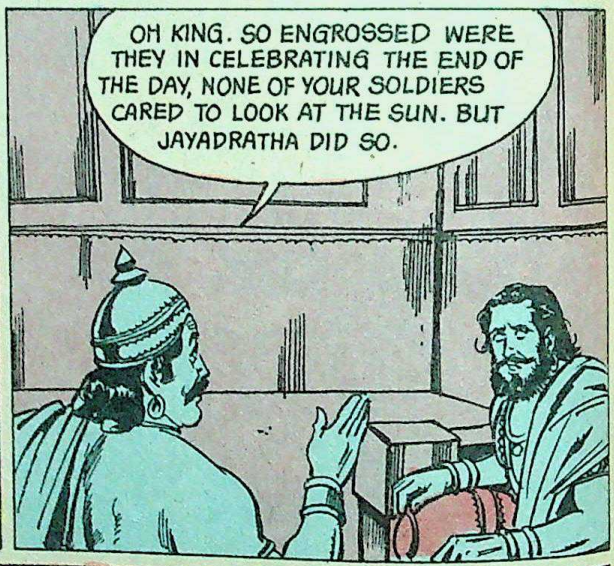

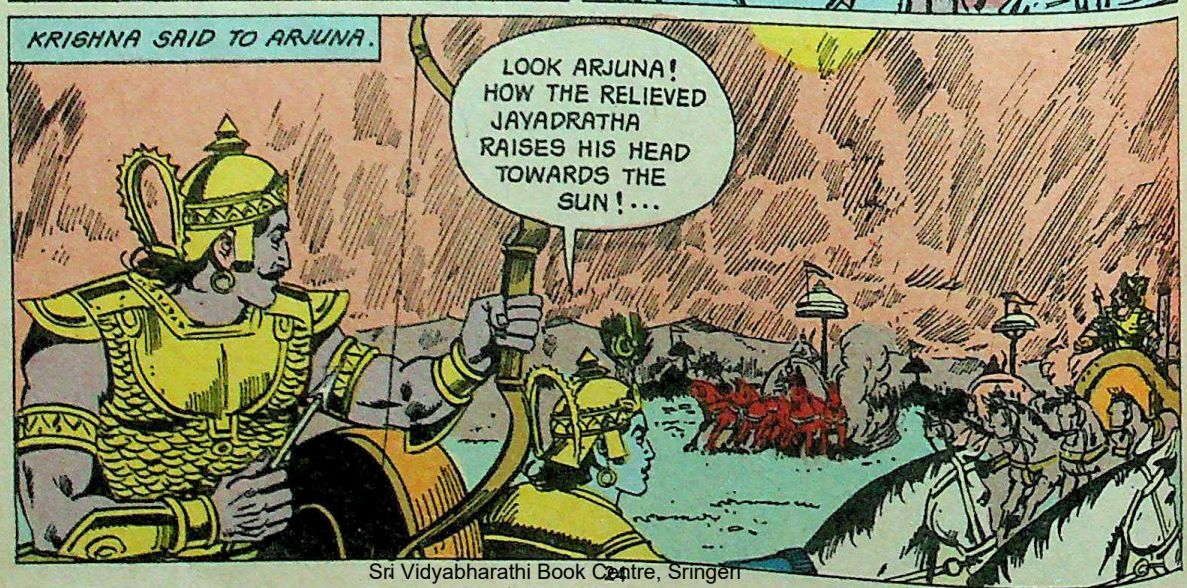

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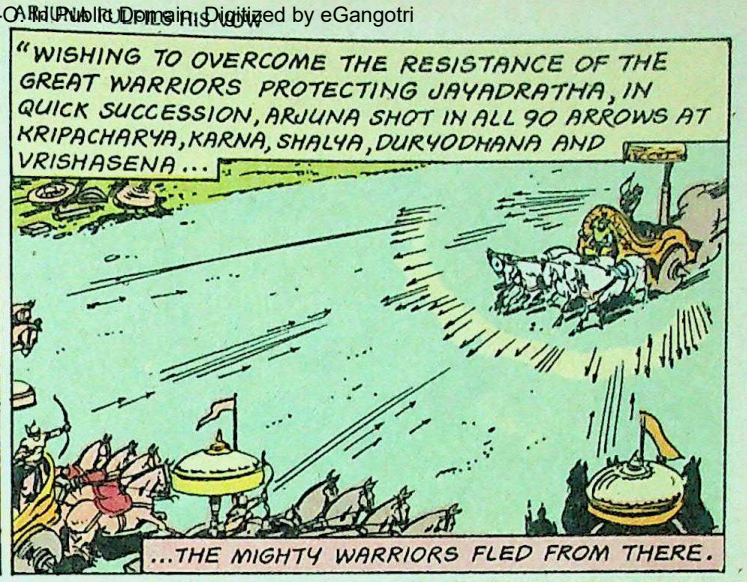

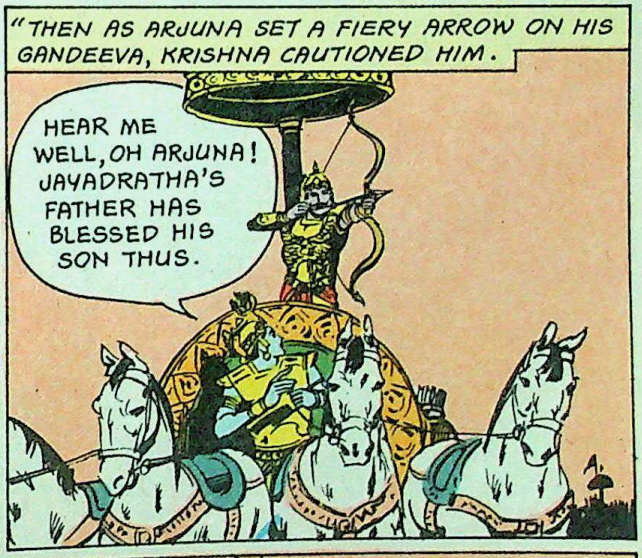

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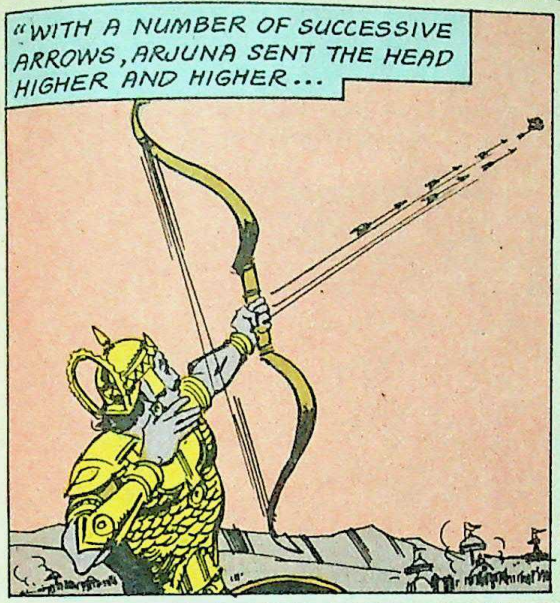

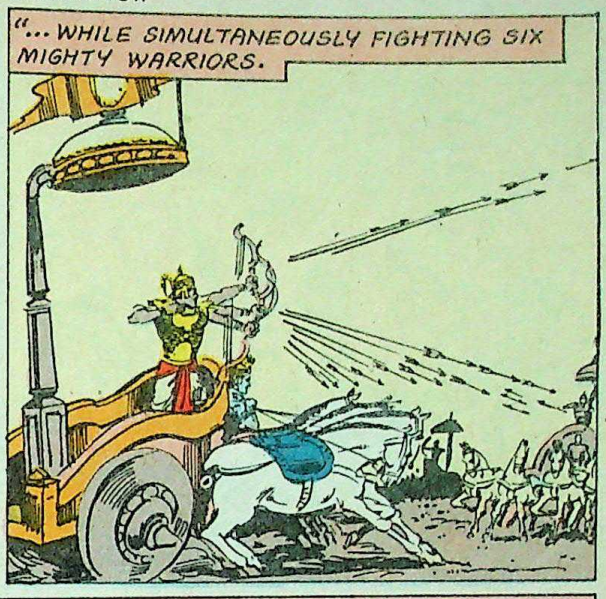

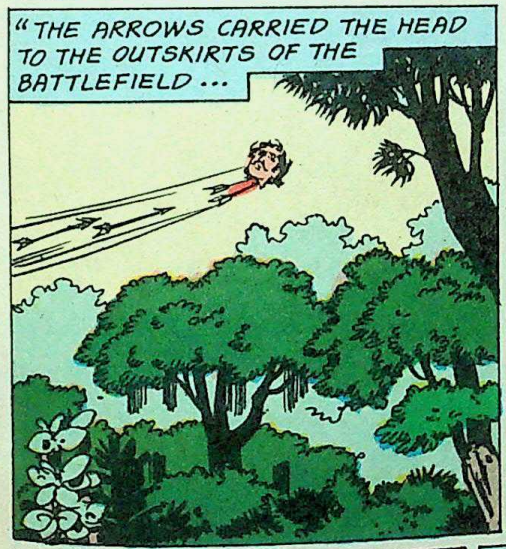

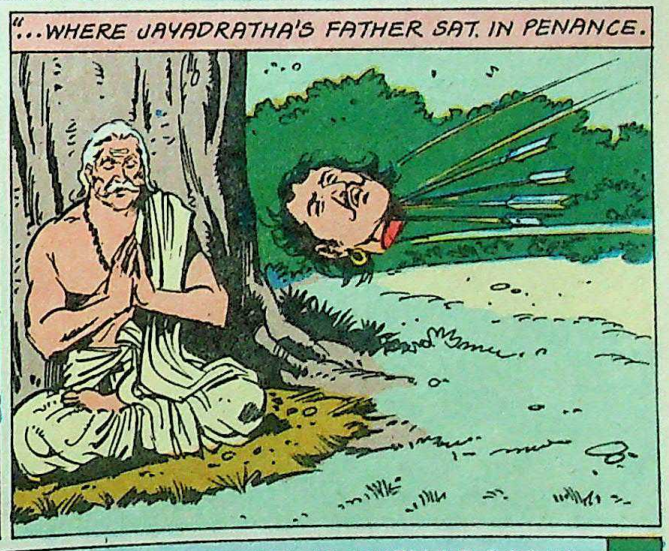

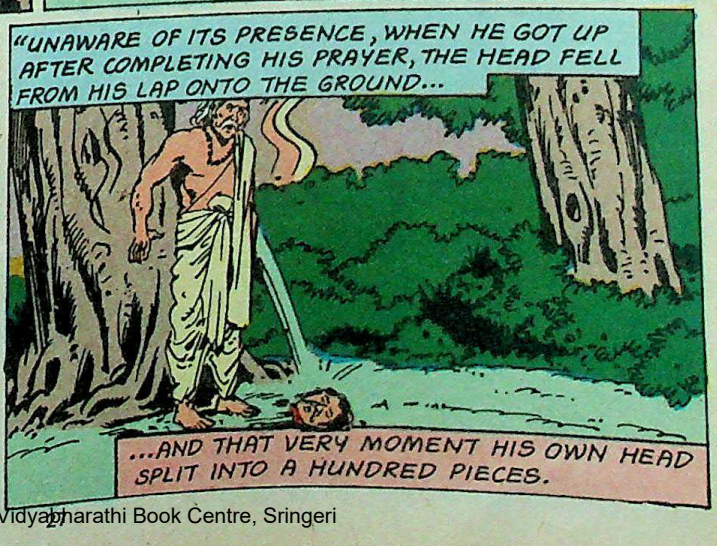

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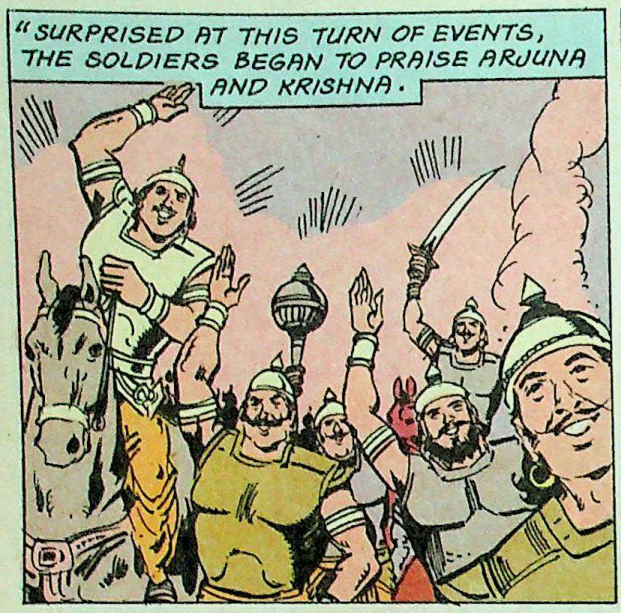

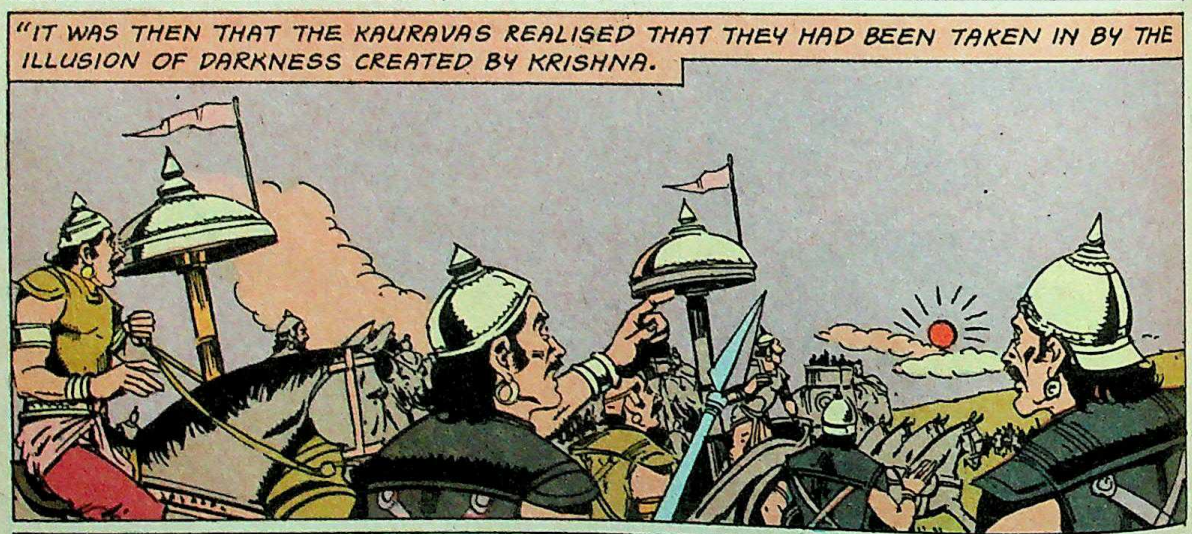

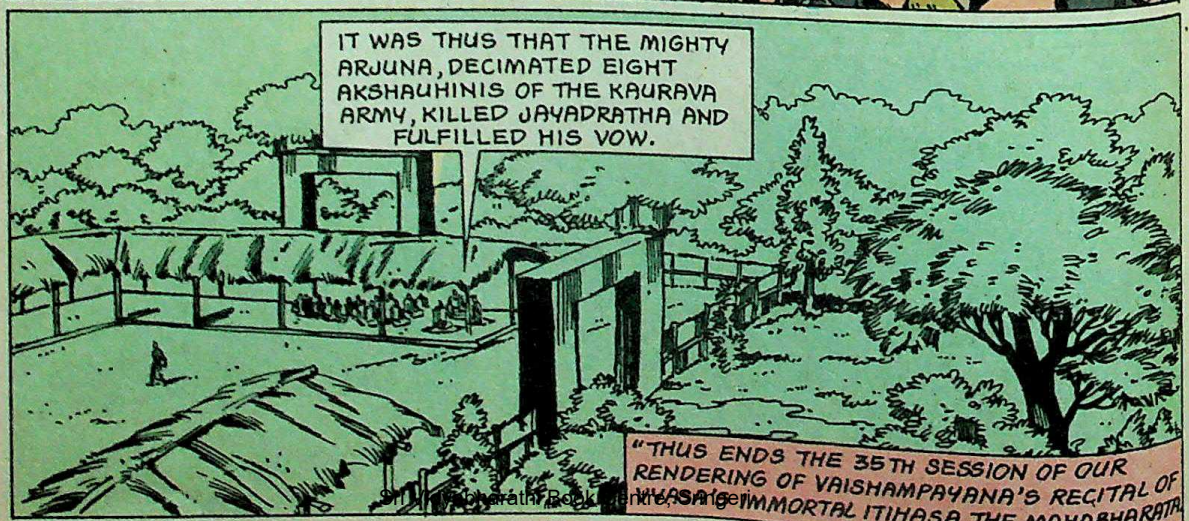

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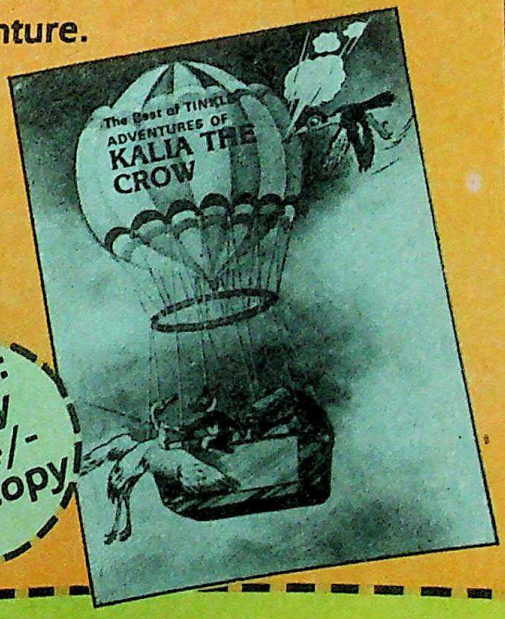

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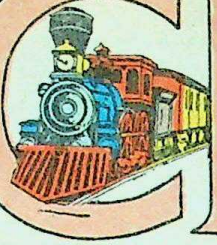

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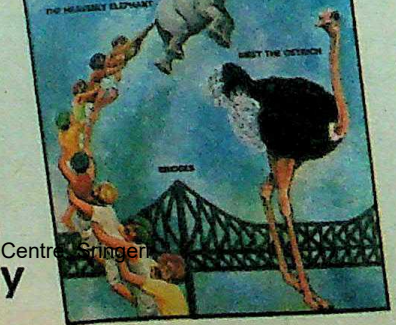

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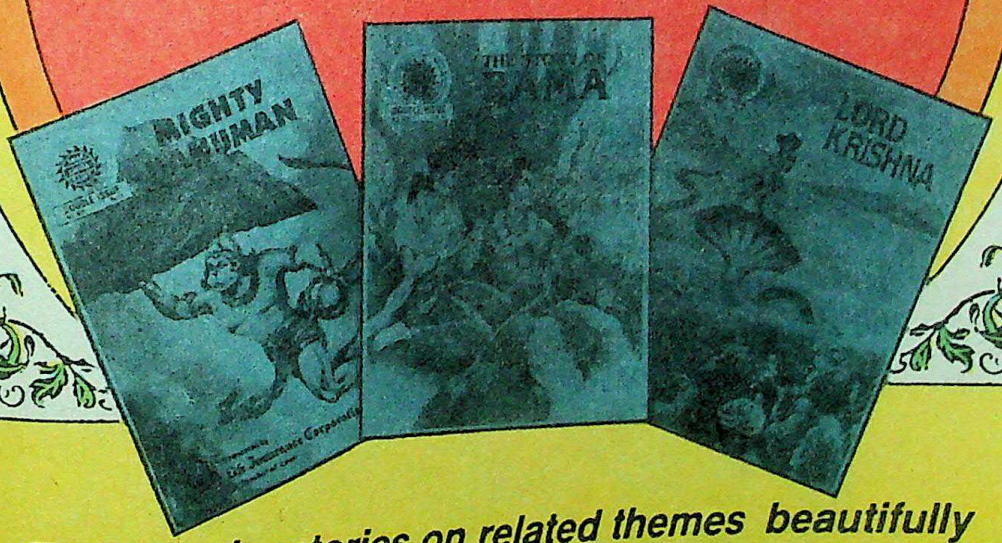

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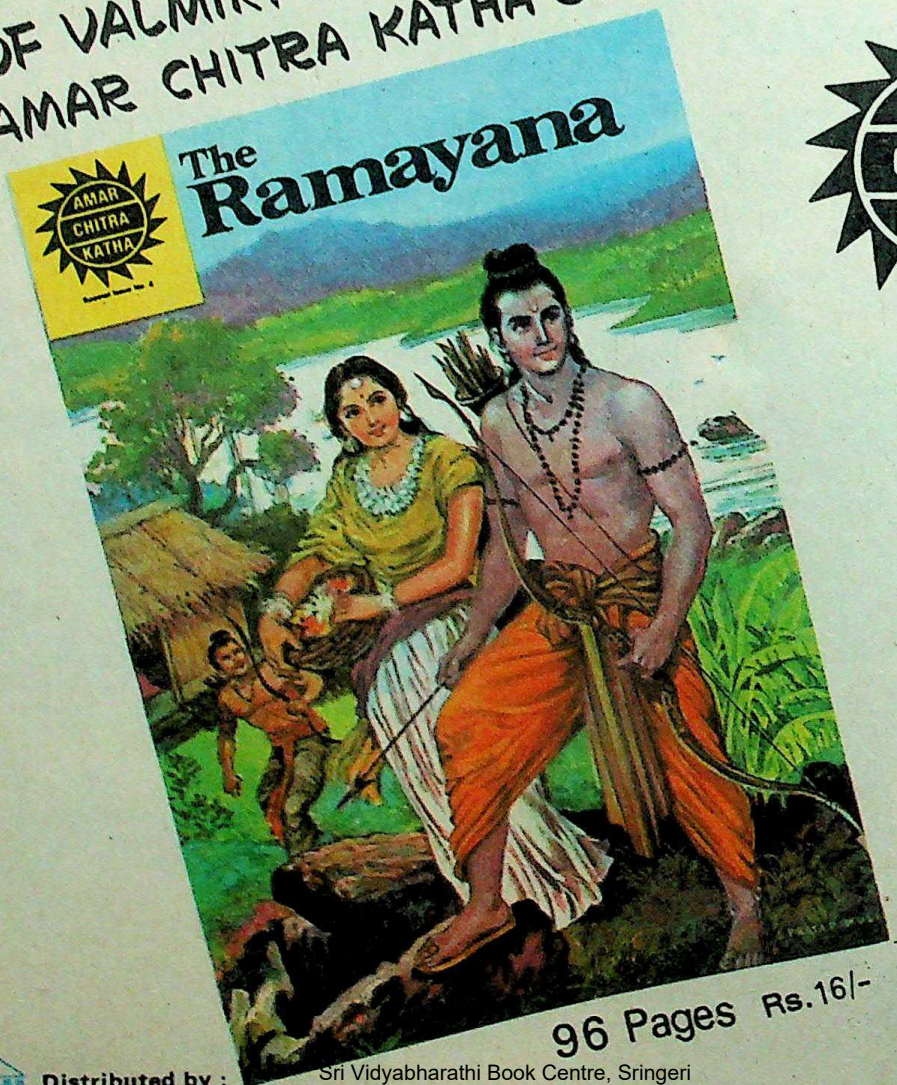

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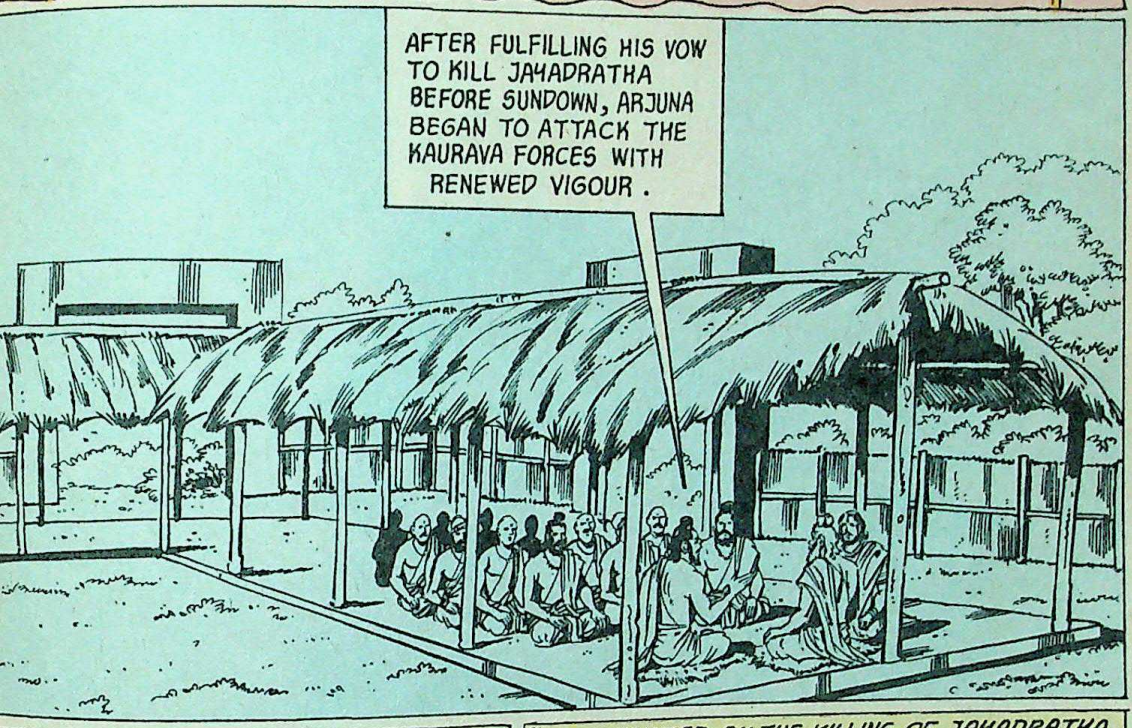

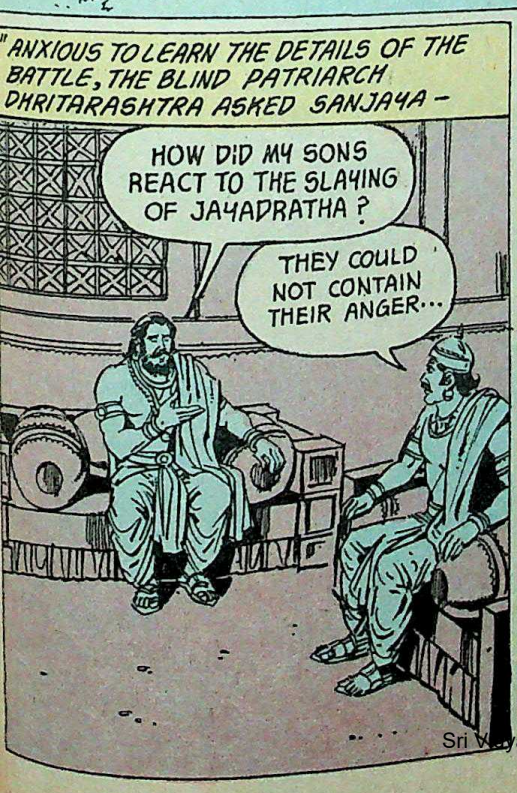

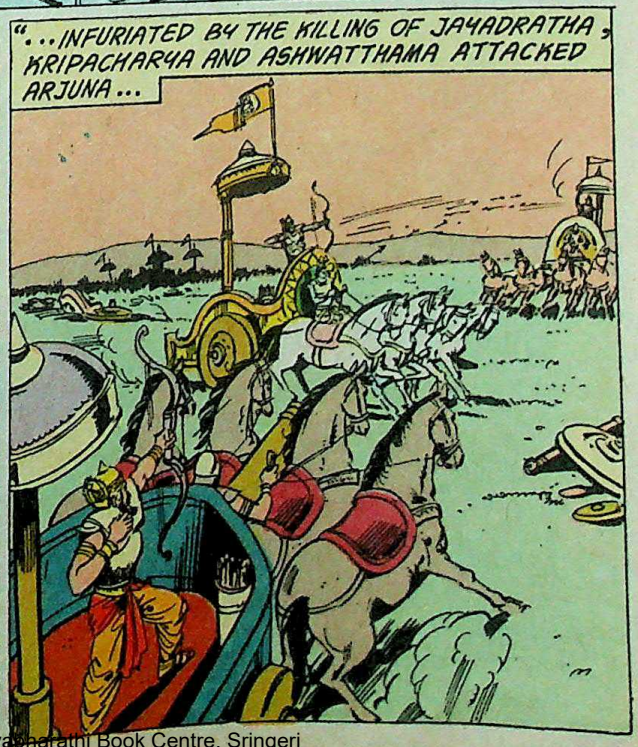

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"RELUCTANT TO ATTACK HIS GURU, ARJUNA USED THE MILDEST OF ARROWS...

"...BUT SO NUMEROUS WERE THEY THAT THEY RENDERED KRIPACHARYA UNCONSCIOUS.

"ARJUNA THOUGHT THAT KRIPACHARYA WAS DEAD. HE WAS SMITTEN WITH GUILT.

WOE BETIDE ME! I HAVE KILLED MY OWN GURU!

"KARNA SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK THE REPENTANT ARJUNA. SATYAKI AND OTHER WARRIORS RUSHED TO CONFRONT HIM.

"KRISHNA HOWEVER PREVENTED ARJUNA FROM FIGHTING WITH KARNA.

NO, ARJUNA, KARNA IS ARMED WITH THE CELESTIAL WEAPON FROM INDRA. DO NOT CONFRONT HIM NOW. LET SATYAKI DEAL WITH HIM.

"TO HELP SATYAKI, KRISHNA SUMMONED HIS OWN CHARIOT.

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A FEARFUL BATTLE ENSUED BETWEEN SATYAKI AND KARNA .

WITH SHARP IRON ARROWS SATYAKI INFLICTED SEVERE INJURIES ON KARNA AND FELLED HIS CHARIOT .

THEN HE REMEMBERED ARJUNA'S VOW TO KILL KARNA. HE THEREFORE SPARED KARNA'S LIFE .

" AS THE SUN BEGAN TO SET, KRISHNA AND ARJUNA PROCEEDED TO MEET YUDHISHTHIRA .

ARJUNA HAS FULFILLED HIS VOW. JAYADRATHA IS DEAD !

YOUR WORDS FILL MY HEART WITH JOY .

YUDHISHTHIRA SAID TO KRISHNA -

IT IS YOU WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ARJUNA TO FULFIL HIS VOW, O LORD OF THE UNIVERSE !

NO YUDHISHTHIRA, YOUR AUSTERITIES AND RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT AND ARJUNA'S SKILL AS A MATCHLESS WARRIOR ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS VICTORY .

" JAYADRATHA'S DEATH HAD BROKEN DURYODHANA'S SPIRIT .

I AM NOW CONVINCED THAT NONE CAN EQUAL ARJUNA'S PROWESS .

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"HE THEN WENT TO DRONA –

HOW MANY KINGS HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR LIVES FOR ME! EVEN THE INVINCIBLE BHEESHMA IS LYING SUPINE IN THE BATTLE-FIELD. SEVEN DIVISIONS OF OUR ARMY ARE DESTROYED.

I HAVE ALWAYS TOLD YOU THAT ARJUNA IS INVINCIBLE. HE COULD KILL JAYADRATHA IN SPITE OF SO MANY OF YOU STRIVING HARD TO PROTECT HIM. YET, I ASSURE YOU, YOU WILL NOT FIND ME WANTING IN MY EFFORTS. TILL I KILL ALL THE PANDAVAS, I WILL NOT TAKE OFF MY ARMOUR.

I WILL PENETRATE THE ENEMY FORCES. MEANWHILE PROTECT YOUR MEN, FOR TODAY THE BATTLE MAY CONTINUE INTO THE NIGHT.

"AS THEY WALKED TOWARDS THE BATTLEFIELD, DURYODHANA CONFIDED IN KARNA –

DRONA HAD PROMISED TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA, BUT HE ALLOWED ARJUNA TO GO PAST HIM. AFTER ALL, ARJUNA HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS FAVOURITE PUPIL.

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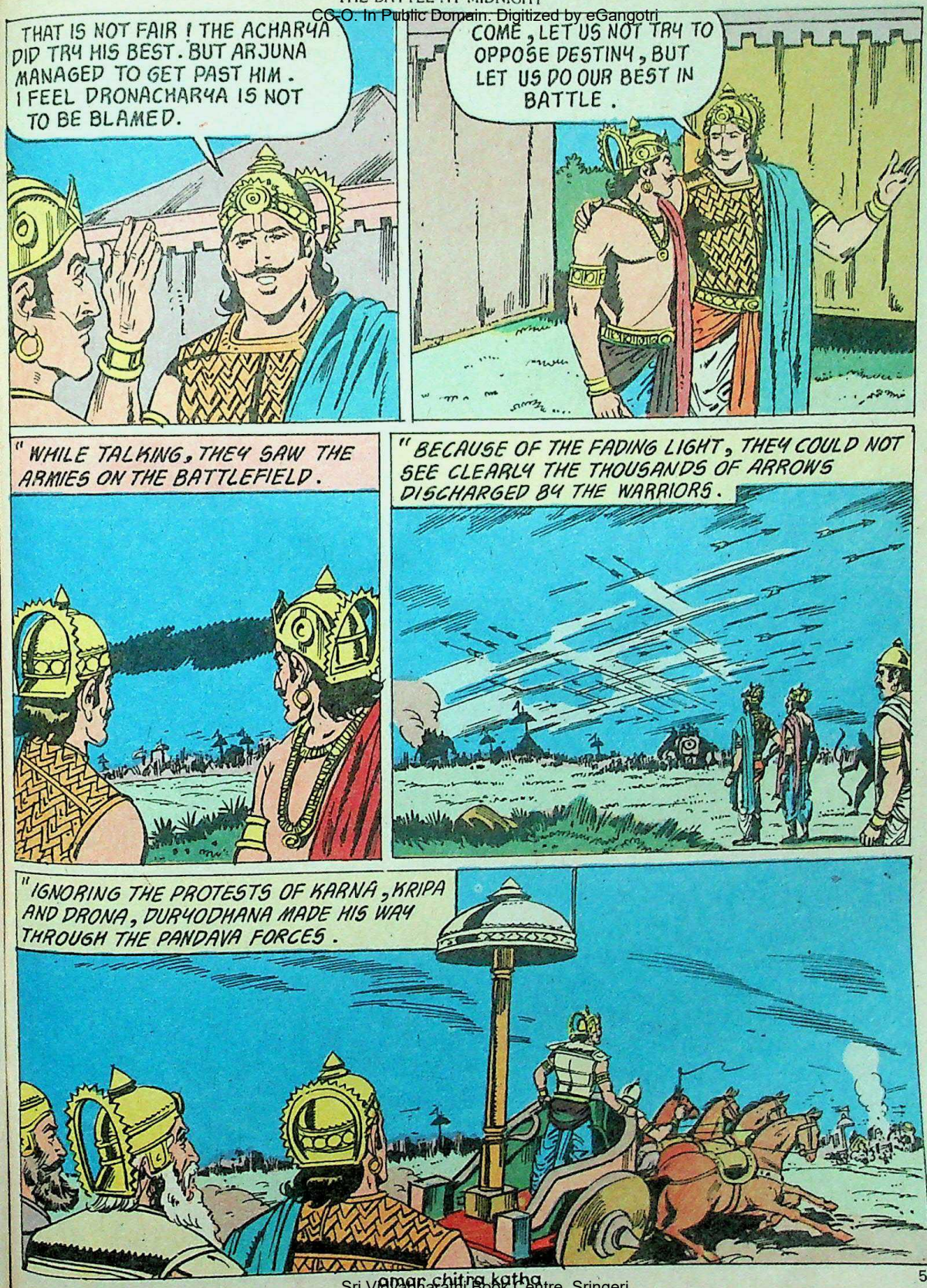

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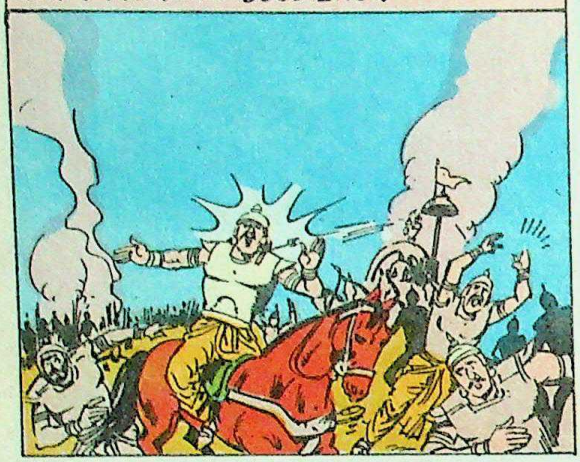
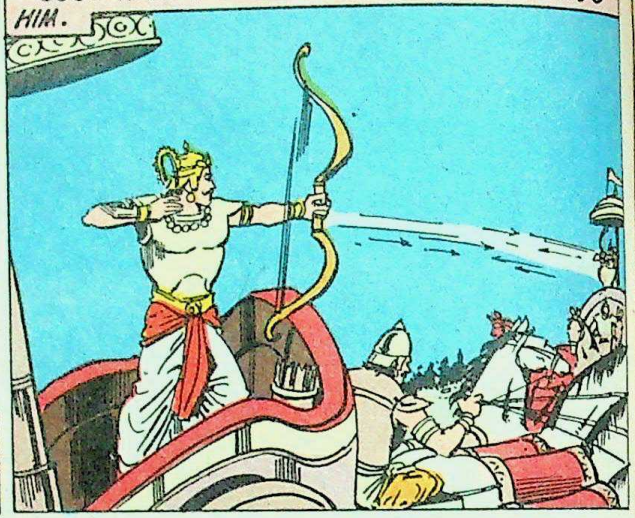
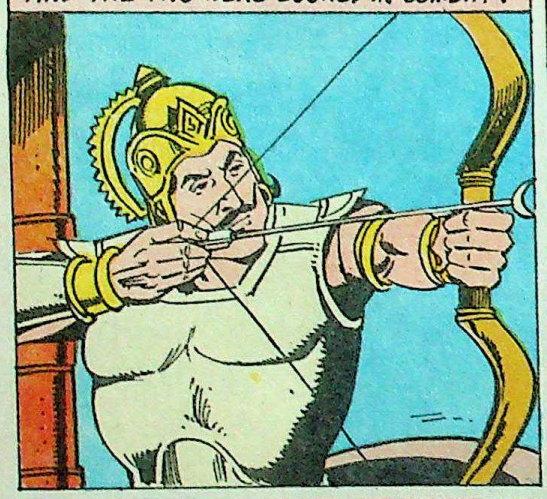
"AS THE MORNING SUN DISPELS THE DARKNESS, DURYODHANA DESTROYED MANY PANDAVA SOLDIERS.



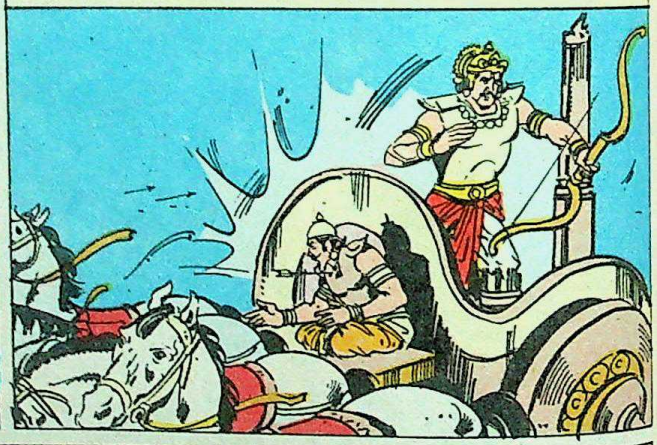
"JUST THEN YUDHISHTHIRA CHARGED TOWARDS HIM.



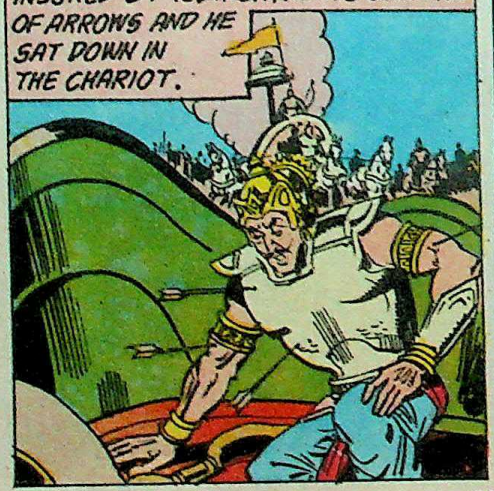
"AND THE TWO WERE LOCKED IN COMBAT.



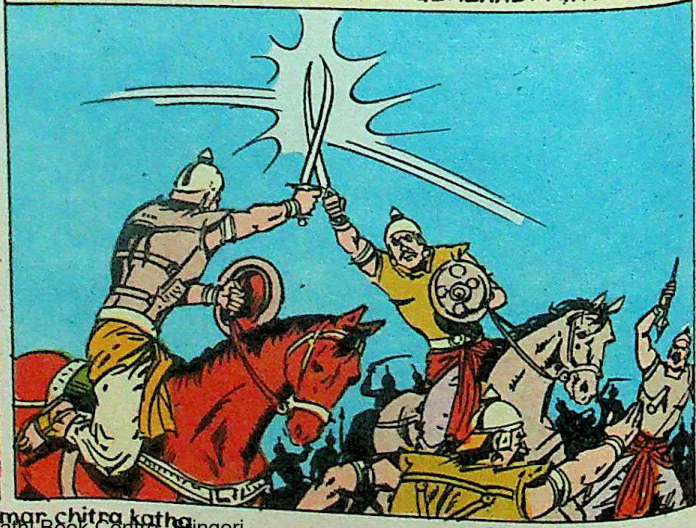
"WITH HIS POWERFUL ARROWS, DURYODHANA INFLICTED INJURIES ON YUDHISHTHIRA, HIS CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES.



"DURYODHANA WAS ALSO SERIOUSLY INJURED BY YUDHISHTHIRA'S BARRAGE OF ARROWS AND HE SAT DOWN IN THE CHARIOT.



SOON THE DUEL TURNED INTO A GENERAL FIGHT.



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" SOMADATTA FAINTED AS A RESULT OF SATYAKI'S ATTACK AND HAD TO BE CARRIED AWAY .

" SEEING THIS , ENRAGED DRONA RUSHED TOWARDS SATYAKI .

" SO FURIOUS WAS HE THAT ANYONE WHO COME IN HIS WAY WAS INSTANTLY KILLED .

" ARJUNA THEN SAID TO KRISHNA –

PLEASE DRIVE ME TOWARDS DRONA .

" BHEEMA TOO FOLLOWED .

" JUST THEN GHATOTKACHA , BHEEMA'S SON , APPEARED ON THE SCENE .

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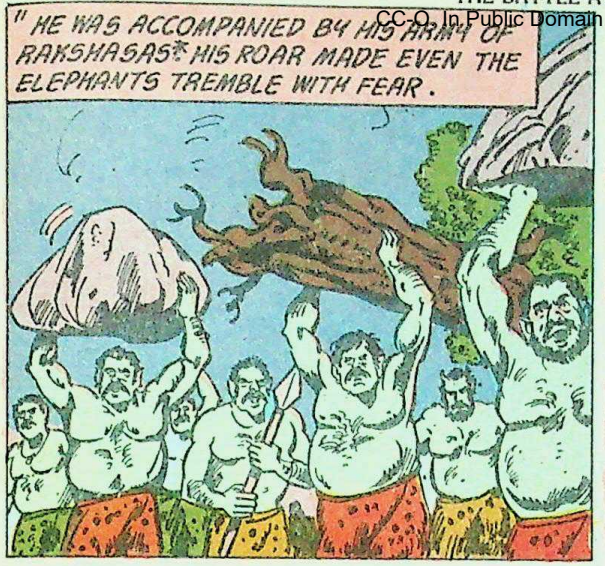

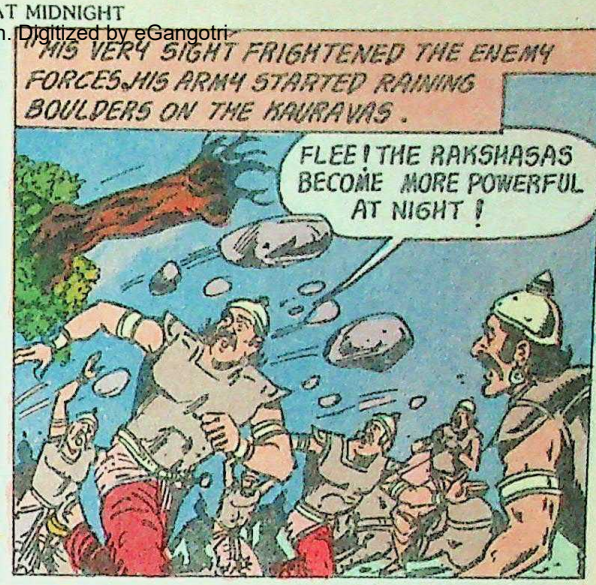

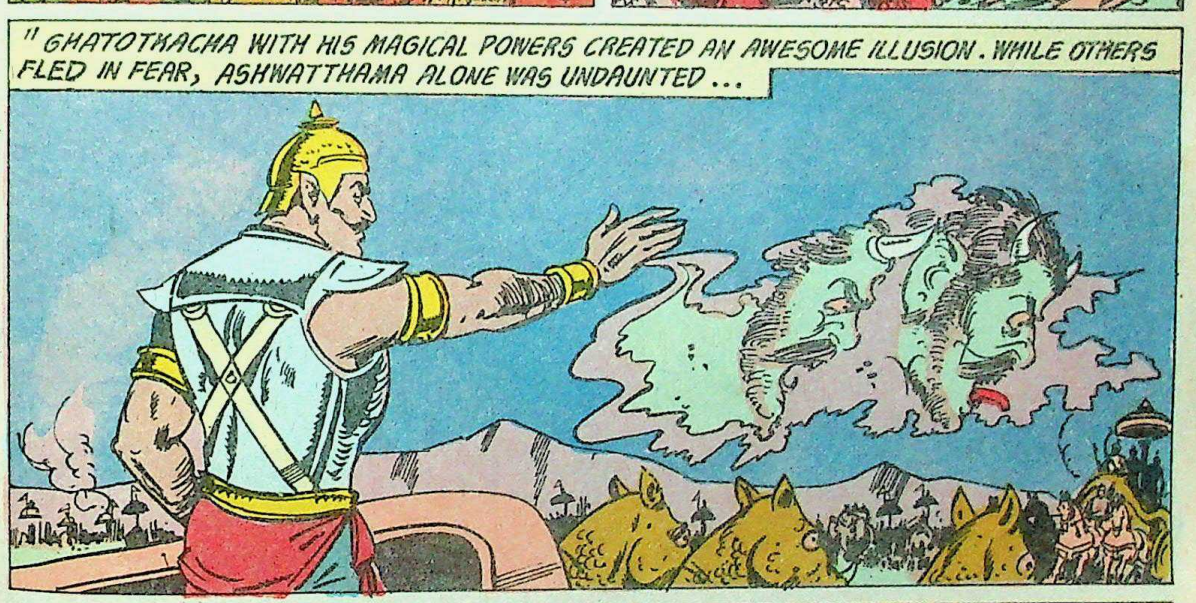

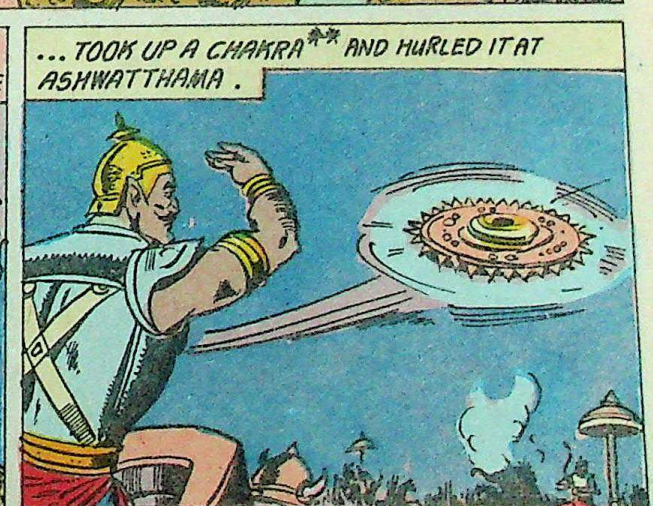

* DEMONS.

** DISC.

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"WITH HIS WELL-AIMED ARROWS, ASHWATTHAMA NIMBLY CAST IT ASUNDER.

"GHATOTKACHA'S SON NOW JOINED THE FIGHT, ALSO USING MAGIC.

"BUT HE SOON SUCCUMBED TO ASHWATTHAMA'S ARROWS. GHATOTKACHA WAS FURIOUS.

ASHWATTHAMA, JUST WAIT! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ALIVE TODAY!

OH! GO AND FIGHT WITH SOMEONE ELSE. DO NOT IRRITATE ME OR ELSE ...

"GHATOTKACHA TRIED VARIOUS TRICKS AND CREATED ILLUSION AFTER ILLUSION TO SCARE ASHWATTHAMA.

"A CALM AND COLLECTED ASHWATTHAMA ASSURED THE WORRIED DURYODHANA.

LEAVE THIS TO ME, O KING! GO AND REASSURE YOUR SOLDIERS.

WITH AN ARROW THAT RESEMBLED THE MACE OF YAMA* ASHWATTHAMA WOUNDED GHATOTKACHA, WHO FELL TO THE GROUND.

* GOD OF DEATH

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"MANY KINGS IN THE PANDAVA ARMY FELT THAT GHATOTKACHA HAD BEEN KILLED, AND LOST THE WILL TO FIGHT. BHEEMA THEN ATTACKED THE KAURAVA ARMY WITH RENEWED VIGOUR.

"SANJAYA NARRATED THE GRUESOME DETAILS.

TEN OF YOUR BRAVE SONS ATTACKED BHEEMA BUT HE KILLED ALL OF THEM.

"MEANWHILE DRONA RAINED VARIOUS CELESTIAL WEAPONS ON YUDHISHTHIRA, INCLUDING TH BRAHMASTRA*.

"BUT HIS EFFORTS WERE FUTILE SINCE YUDHISHTHIRA MATCHED HIM WEAPON FOR WEAPON, AND FENDED OFF HIS ATTACK.

"DRONA NOW TURNED AWAY AND ATTACKED DRUPADA'S ARMY ONLY TO FIND ARJUNA AND BHEEMA CONFRONTING HIM.

"KAURAVA SOLDIERS ENFEEBLED BY LACK OF SLEEP AND TERRIFIED BY THE DARK NIGHT, RAN AMOK UNDER ARJUNA'S ONSLAUGHT.

* A WEAPON INVOKING THE POWER OF BRAHMA.

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"ADDRESSING KARNA, DURYODHANA SAID—

KARNA, MY FRIEND, THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO PROVE YOUR FRIENDSHIP. COME TO THE RESCUE OF MY MEN.

REST ASSURED, I SWEAR I WILL KILL THE PANDAVAS AND PANCHALAS AND LAY THE EARTH AT YOUR FEET TO RULE OVER.

"KRIPACHARYA INTERVENED WITH A MOCKING SMILE—

IF WORDS WERE ENOUGH, THEN INDEED YOU ARE THE MAN DURYODHANA NEEDS NOW.

YOU MAY BRAG ABOUT YOUR PROWESS TILL YOU FACE ARJUNA'S ARROWS.

JUST AS BRAHMANAS ARE RENOWNED FOR THEIR SERMONS, KSHATRIYAS FOR THEIR VALOUR, YOUR PROWESS IS IN BUILDING CASTLES IN THE AIR.

YOU WILL SEE ME KILL ARJUNA WITH THE HELP OF THE SHAKTI GIVEN BY INDRA.

"WHEN KRIPACHARYA CONTINUED HIS TAUNTS, KARNA FLARED UP.

ONE MORE WORD FROM YOU AND I WILL CUT OFF YOUR TONGUE.

ENRAGED BY KARNA'S VERBAL DUEL WITH HIS UNCLE KRIPA, ASHWATTHAMA RUSHED TOWARDS KARNA WITH HIS DRAWN SWORD RAISED UP. BUT DURYODHANA SAID—

SHED THIS ANGER. WE HAVE A GREAT TASK BEFORE US.

WE WILL FORGIVE KARNA NOW. BUT SOON ARJUNA WILL SHATTER HIS EGO.

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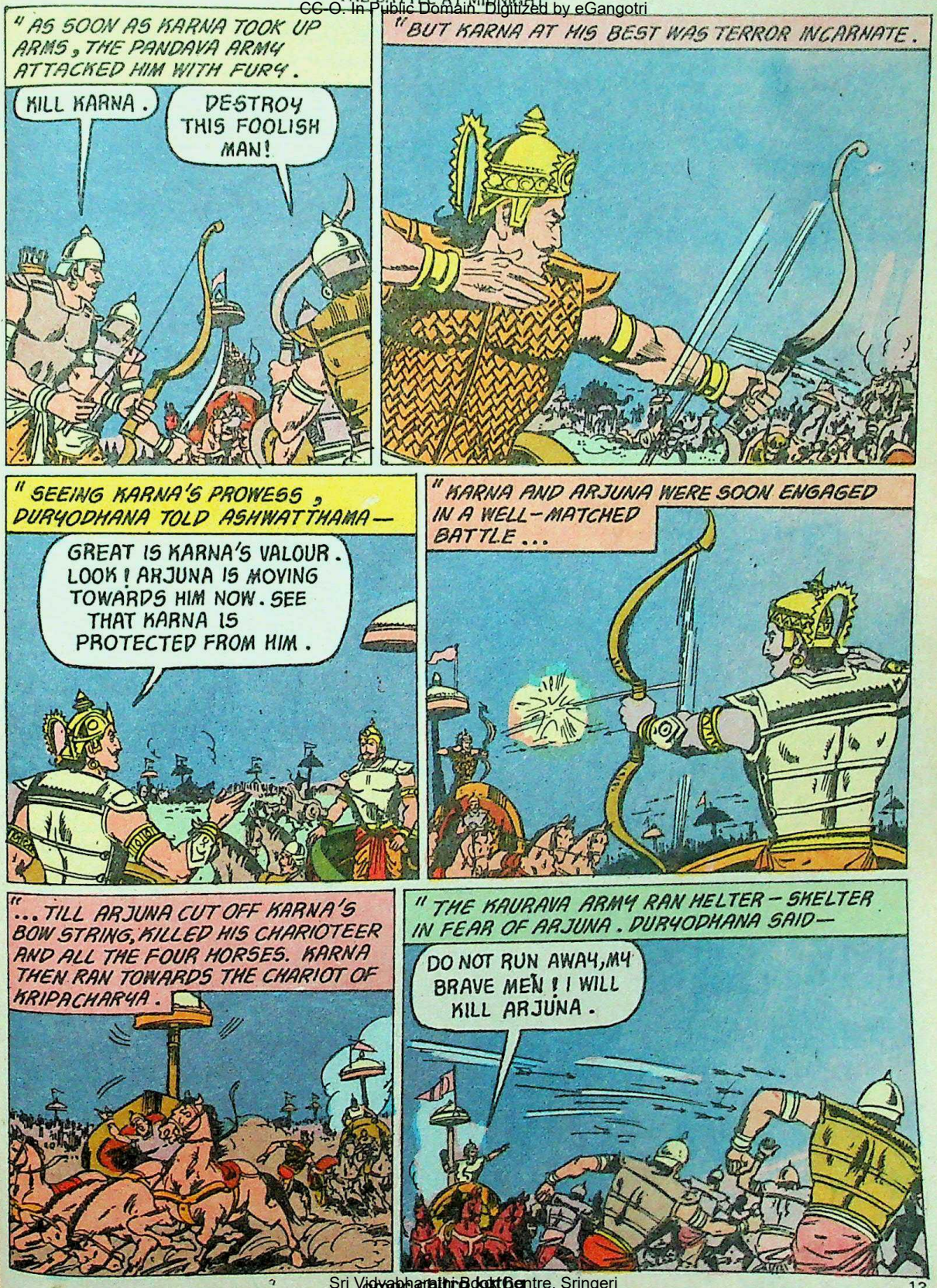

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"KRIPA CONFIDED IN ASHWATTHAMA.

IN HIS RAGE, DURYODHANA WANTS TO CONFRONT ARJUNA. STOP HIM BEFORE HE GETS KILLED.

"ASHWATTHAMA AT ONCE WENT TO DURYODHANA.

DO NOT INSULT ME BY RUSHING TO FIGHT ARJUNA WHEN I AM ALIVE. LEAVE THAT TO ME.

AH! BUT BOTH YOU AND YOUR FATHER ARE BESOTTED WITH YOUR LOVE FOR THE PANDAVAS. ELSE YOU WOULD HAVE ROUTED THEIR ARMY WITH EASE.

"ASHWATTHAMA REALISED THAT DURYODHANA WAS SPEAKING IN ANGER.

OF COURSE WE DO LOVE THE PANDAVAS. BUT IN THE BATTLEFIELD WE FIGHT THEM WITH ALL OUR MIGHT. JUST WATCH MY PROWESS TODAY.

"TRUE TO HIS WORD, ASHWATTHAMA CHALLENGED THE ENEMY FORCES.

COME, RAIN YOUR ARROWS ON ME!

"SEEING THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS FLEEING UNDER ASHWATTHAMA'S ATTACK, DHRISHTADYUMNA CHALLENGED HIM—

COME FIGHT WITH ME IF YOU ARE A TRUE WARRIOR.

STAND STILL FOR JUST TWO MINUTES AND I WILL SEND YOU TO THE ABODE OF YAMA*.

"THE DUEL OF WORDS BETWEEN ASHWATTHAMA AND DHRISHTADYUMNA WAS AS FIERCE AS THE ONE WITH ARROWS.

WAIT! WAIT! I WILL PIERCE YOUR BODY WITH ARROWS!

* GOD OF DEATH

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"ASHWATTHAMA MANAGED TO DESTROY DHRISHTADYUMNA'S UMBRELLA, REAR ATTENDANTS, CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES.

ASHWATTHAMA HAS DEFEATED DHRISHTADYUMNA.

MEANWHILE SATYAKI SAID TO HIS CHARIOTEER—

TAKE ME TO SOMADATTA. I SWEAR I WILL KILL HIM TODAY.

"TRUE TO HIS WORD, SATYAKI DID SLAY SOMADATTA AFTER A LONG FIGHT.

WHEN THE KAURAVA WARRIORS CONVERGED ON SATYAKI, YUDHISHTHIRA RUSHED TO HIS HELP AND LAUNCHED A FURIOUS ATTACK ON DRONA. DEEPLY WOUNDED, DRONA SAT DOWN IN THE CHARIOT.

"ON RECOVERING, DRONA SENT A VAYU ASTRA* WHICH YUDHISHTHIRA REPELLED BRAVELY. SEEING THIS, KRISHNA CAUTIONED.

DRONA IS BENT ON CAPTURING YOU. AVOID HIM. A KING SHOULD FIGHT ONLY WITH A KING.

KRISHNA IS RIGHT. LET ME GO AND HELP BHEEMA IN HIS ATTACK.

"ALL THIS WHILE, THE BATTLE WAS BEING WAGED IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, AIDED BY GUESSWORK AND THE CALLING OUT OF NAMES.

* ARROW INVOKING THE POWER OF THE WIND GOD

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"IN THE BATTLE THAT ENSUED, SEVERAL DUELS WERE FOUGHT.

ASHWATTHAMA ABLY AVERTED GHATOTKACHA'S ADVANCES.

BHEEMA DEFEATED DURYODHANA.

KARNA AND SAHADEVA MET IN A DUEL.

"SAHADEVA JUMPED DOWN FROM HIS CHARIOT AND PICKED UP THE WHEEL OF THE CHARIOT TO FLING AT KARNA.

DEAR CHILD! DO NOT TRY THE IMPOSSIBLE! WHY TRY TO FIGHT YOUR SUPERIORS?

KARNA SHATTERED THE WHEEL WITH HIS ARROWS BUT SPARED SAHADEVA'S LIFE. LIGHTLY TOUCHING HIM WITH THE TIP OF HIS BOW HE SAID—

GO AND JOIN YOUR BROTHER ARJUNA, OR IF YOU WISH, RETURN TO YOUR HOME.

"MEANWHILE, VIRATA WAS DEFEATED BY SHALYA AND SHIKHANDI WAS VANQUISHED BY KRIPA. HOWEVER, NAKULA SCORED A VICTORY OVER SHAKUNI.

"THE BATTLE THAT RAGED BETWEEN KARNA AND SATYAKI WAS A TERRIBLE ONE.

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"KARNA'S FURY WAS CREATING HAVOC AMONG THE PANDAVA FORCES. ARJUNA SAID —

O KRISHNA! TAKE ME TOWARDS KARNA. I MUST KILL HIM OR BE KILLED TODAY.

"AWARE OF THE MIGHTY SHAKTI IN KARNA'S POSSESSION, KRISHNA DEMURRED —

BESIDES YOU, GHATOTKACHA ALONE IS CAPABLE OF FACING KARNA. LET HIM DO SO, WHILE YOU PROTECT YUDHISHTHIRA.

"THEY SUMMONED GHATOTKACHA.

FIGHT KARNA WITH ALL YOUR ASTRAS AND KILL HIM. WE ARE DEPENDING ON YOU.

SATYAKI WILL BE WITH YOU. TOGETHER YOU CAN WORK WONDERS.

I WILL GO AT ONCE. SUCH A BATTLE WILL I WAGE TODAY THAT IT WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR EVER.

"IN THE MIDST OF THAT DREADFUL NIGHT, KARNA AND GHATOTKACHA FACED EACH OTHER.

"JUST AS DURYODHANA WAS ABOUT TO SEND DUHSHASANA TO KARNA'S AID, ALAMBUSHA APPROACHED HIM.

MY FATHER, JATASURA, THE LEADER OF RAKSHASAS, WAS KILLED BY THE PANDAVAS. GIVE ME A CHANCE TO AVENGE HIS DEATH. LET ME FIGHT THE PANDAVAS.

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"DURYODHANA WAS GLAD TO OBLIGE.

YOU ARE WELCOME. GO AND FIGHT GHATOTKACHA.

THE TWO RAKSHASAS FOUGHT WITH VARIOUS WEAPONS AND FINALLY WITH BARE HANDS.

SUDDENLY, GHATOTKACHA JUMPED UP AND SWOOPED DOWN WITH A SWORD.

"WITH A DREADFUL CRY, GHATOTKACHA CUT OFF HIS OPPONENT'S HEAD.

"APPROACHING DURYODHANA, HE THREW ALAMBUSHA'S HEAD TOWARDS HIM.

IT IS SAID ONE SHOULD NOT VISIT A KING WITHOUT A GIFT. WAIT AWHILE AND I WILL BRING YOU A HEAD WHICH IS MORE DEAR TO YOU—KARNA'S!

SO FIERCE WAS THE BATTLE BETWEEN KARNA AND GHATOTKACHA THAT IT MADE MIGHTY WARRIORS TREMBLE. GHATOTKACHA WAS IN THE SKY IN A MINUTE...

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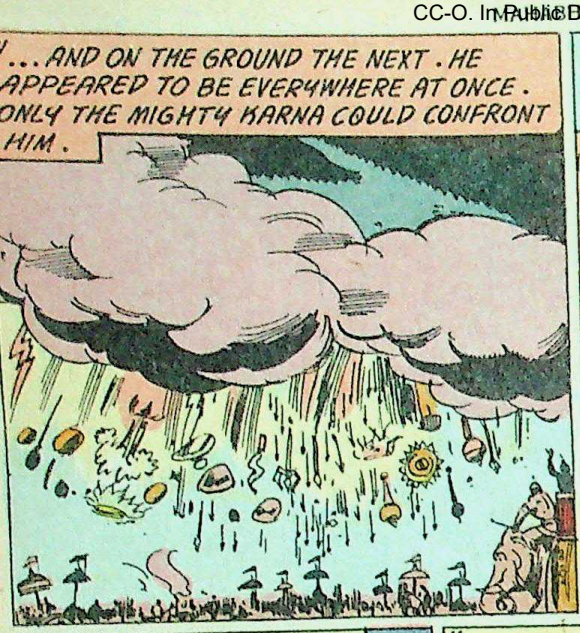

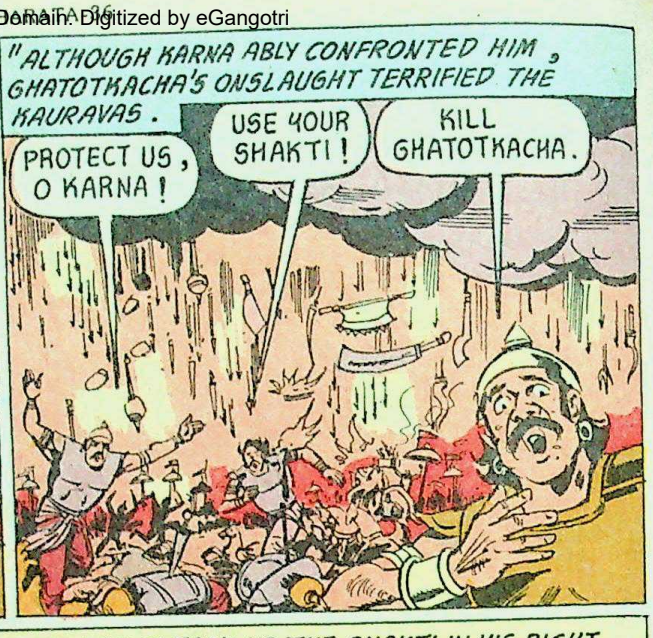

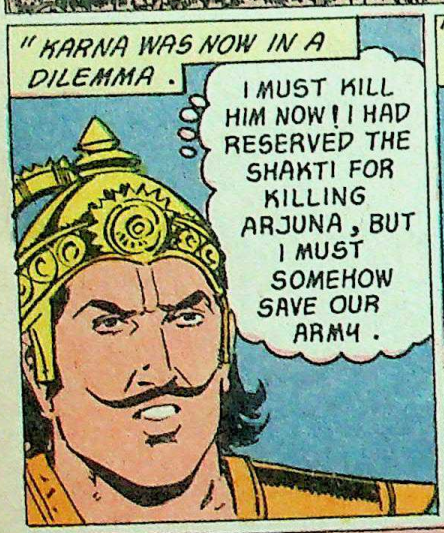

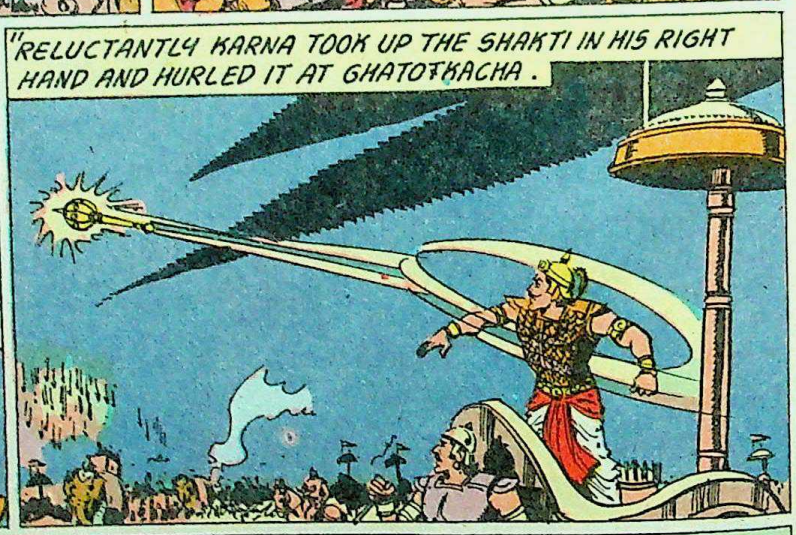

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... SO THAT WHEN THE SHAKTI PIERCED AND FELLED HIM, A VAST NUMBER OF KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE CRUSHED UNDER HIS WEIGHT.

" BHEEMA AND OTHER PANDAVAS WERE SHOCKED AT HIS DEATH.

KRISHNA CONSOLED THEM AND SAID TO ARJUNA.

KARNA HAS USED HIS SHAKTI ONCE AND IT HAS RETURNED TO INDRA. OH! HOW I HAD WORRIED ABOUT HIS USING IT AGAINST YOU. NOW BEREFT OF THE SHAKTI, KARNA IS LIKE A FANGLESS SERPENT.

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I AM HAPPY BECAUSE YOU HAVE BEEN RESCUED FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH.

"DHRITARASHTRA INTERRUPTED SANJAYA'S NARRATION.

BUT WHY DID KARNA NOT USE HIS SHAKTI AGAINST ARJUNA ALL THESE DAYS?

SATYAKI TOO ASKED KRISHNA THE SAME QUESTION.

"KRISHNA REPLIED-

EVERYDAY KARNA WOULD PLAN TO ISOLATE ARJUNA IN A DUEL AND KILL HIM WITH THE SHAKTI BUT I SO MANOEUVRED ARJUNA'S CHARIOT THAT THEY DID NOT CONFRONT EACH OTHER. I ALSO CLOUDED KARNA'S MIND A LITTLE TO TO MAKE HIM FORGET ABOUT HIS MOST POWERFUL WEAPON.

"YUDHISHTHIRA LAMENTED OVER GHATOTKACHA'S DEATH AND RECALLED HOW HE HAD HELPED THEM IN VARIOUS WAYS.

HE KEPT US COMPANY WHILE ARJUNA WAS AWAY.

HE WAS WITH US IN THE MOUTAIN HIMAVAN.

HE CARRIED DRAUPADI WHEN SHE COULD NOT WALK.

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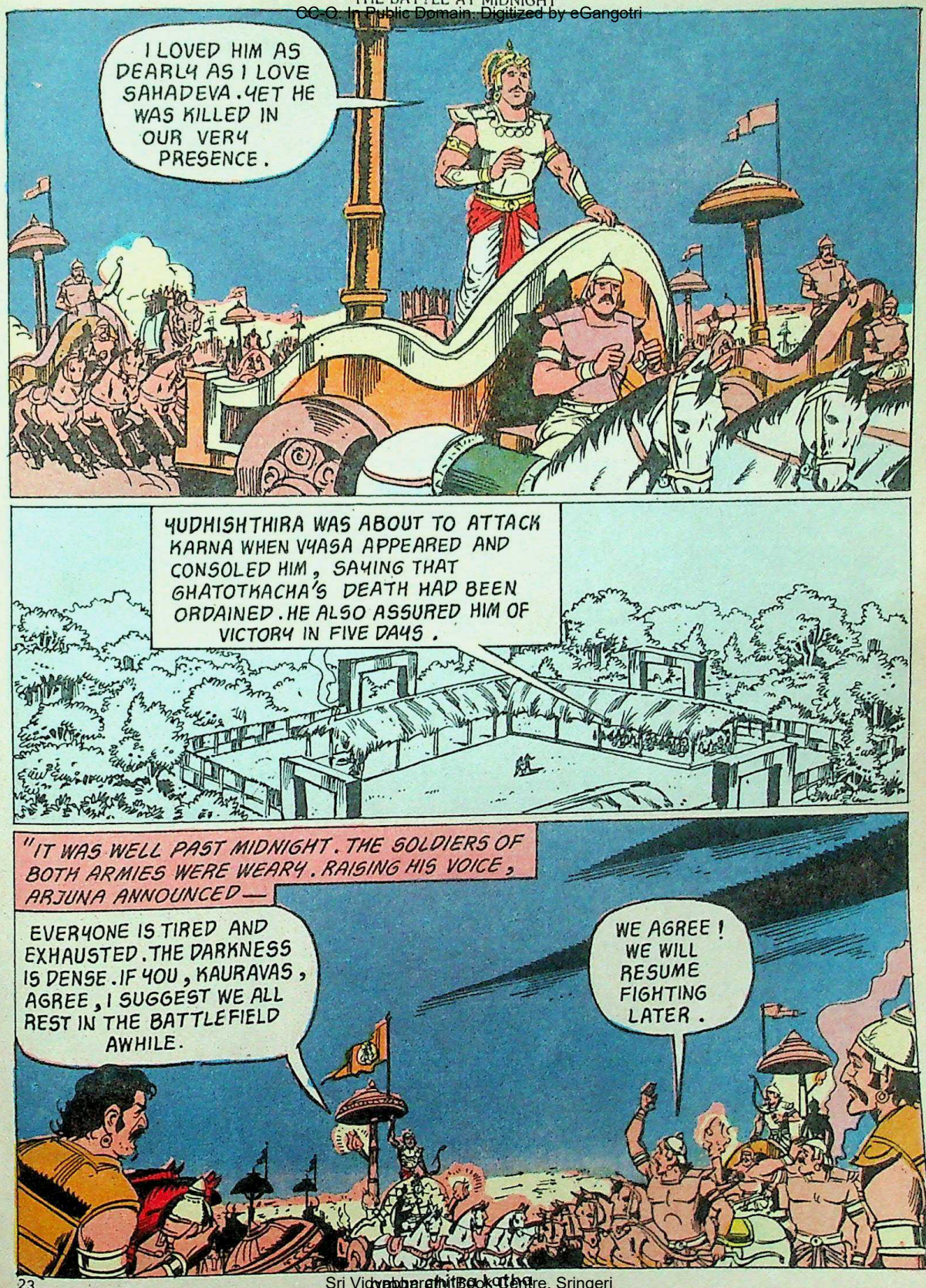

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"AS ARJUNA'S SUGGESTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED, THE SOLIDERS GRATEFULLY LAY DOWN TO SLEEP.

ONLY ARJUNA COULD BE SO THOUGHTFUL! BLESS HIM.

"THE BATTLEFIELD WHICH HAD RESOUNDED WITH WAR CRIES WAS NOW ENVELOPED IN SILENCE. THE HUGE ARMIES LAY STILL LIKE A PAINTING DRAWN BY A GIFTED ARTIST...

"...TILL THE MOON CAME UP. ONE BY ONE THE MEN BEGAN TO STIR. THE BATTLE WAS RESUMED IN THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF THE MOON.

DURYODHANA SAID TO DRONA -

WITH YOUR RENOWNED PROWESS AND CELESTIAL WEAPONS, YOU COULD EASILY DEFEAT THE PANDAVAS. BUT ALAS! YOU CONTINUE TO FAVOUR THEM.

"THE OFT-REPEATED SARCASM AND ACCUSATION WERE BEGINNING TO IRRITATE DRONA.

SO FAR I HAVE FOUGHT WITH FAIR AND JUST MEANS AND REFRAINED FROM USING DIVINE WEAPONS ON ORDINARY SOLDIERS. NOW IF YOU SO WISH, I WILL USE UNFAIR MEANS AS WELL, TO FIGHT. BUT BELIEVE ME, WHEN I SAY, ARJUNA IS INVINCIBLE.

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"DURYODHANA WAS TOUCHED TO THE QUICK BY THIS PRAISE OF HIS ARCH ENEMY. HE SAID—

WE WILL NOW DIVIDE THE ARMY INTO TWO. WITH ONE HALF I WILL ATTACK YOUR FAVOURITE ARJUNA.

I WISH YOU WELL. YOU HAVE LIVED A FULL LIFE; GO AND DO YOUR DUTY NOW. GO, FIGHT ARJUNA.

"ONE HALF OF THE ARMY WITH DURYODHANA, DUHSHASANA, SHAKUNI AND KARNA, SET OUT TO CONFRONT ARJUNA. BUT THEY WERE ROUTED IN NO TIME.

" DRONA LED THE REST OF THE ARMY AND KILLED THREE GRANDSONS OF DRUPADA.

"WITH TWO SHARP JAVELINS, HE KILLED VIRATA AND DRUPADA. DHRISHTADYUMNA WAS STUNNED WITH GRIEF.

THIS MAN HAS KILLED MY FATHER AS WELL AS MY SONS. I WILL NOT LEAVE HIM TODAY.

"SWEARING REVENGE, DHRISHTADYUMNA ATTACKED DRONA AND THE KAURAVAS.

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"DURYODHANA CAME TO HELP DRONA WITH THE REST OF THE ARMY.

"TRY AS HE MIGHT, DHRISHTADYUMNA COULD NOT REACH DRONA. BHEEMA TAUNTED HIM...

DRONA HAS KILLED YOUR FATHER AND SON. YOU HAVE SWORN TO KILL HIM. HOW CAN YOU SEE HIM ALIVE?

... AND PENETRATING THE KAURAVA ARMY, ENGAGED IN A FIERCE BATTLE WITH KARNA.

"MEANWHILE THE SUN ROSE IN THE EAST.* THE WARRIORS NOW FOUGHT WITH RENEWED VIGOUR. KARNA WAS ENGAGED IN A COMBAT BY BHEEMA.

"BUT THE SPECTACULAR SIGHT WAS THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN DRONA AND ARJUNA.

"AFTER A PROLONGED FIGHT WITH EARTHLY AND CELESTIAL WEAPONS, DRONA SENT THE BRAHMASTRA TOWARDS ARJUNA WHO COUNTERED IT WITH THE SAME ASTRA.

NOW DRONA TURNED AWAY FROM ARJUNA AND FOUGHT THE PANCHALA ARMY.

* THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE BATTLE.

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"DURYODHANA AND SATYAKI WERE ENGAGED IN A STRANGE ENCOUNTER.

"WHILE THEY RAINED ARROWS AT EACH OTHER, THEY RECALLED WITH NOSTALGIA THEIR EARLIER DAYS.

WHAT HAPPY TIMES WE HAD TOGETHER, DEAR SATYAKI. NOW BECAUSE OF MY GREED, WE MEET AS ENEMIES.

MY DEAR DURYODHANA, THIS IS NEITHER OUR GURU'S HOUSE NOR AN ASSEMBLY. LET US FIGHT LIKE TRUE KSHATRIYAS.

"MEANWHILE DRONA WAS FIGHTING AS IF POSSESSED BY A DEMON. THE PANDAVAS WATCHED AGHAST.

THIS IS NOT LIKE THE ACHARYA AT ALL.

HE DOES NOT LOOK HUMAN.

"THE PANIC AMONG THE SOLDIERS SET KRISHNA THINKING.

DRONA IS USING UNFAIR MEANS. HE IS EVEN USING DIVINE WEAPONS AGAINST ORDINARY SOLDIERS.

"HE SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA –

IF DRONA KEEPS FIGHTING THUS, YOU WILL HAVE NO ARMY LEFT. WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE HIM LAY DOWN HIS WEAPONS.

YES, BUT HOW?

KRISHNA THOUGHTFULLY SAID –

I AM SURE IF HE HEARS THAT HIS SON ASHWATTHAMA IS NO MORE, HE WILL STOP FIGHTING.

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"ARJUNA DID NOT APPROVE OF THIS SUGGESTION. YUDHISHTHIRA AGREED AFTER MUCH PERSUASION. MEANWHILE, BHEEMA KILLED AN ELEPHANT CALLED ASHWATTHAMA. GOING NEAR DRONA HE ANNOUNCED—

ASHWATTHAMA IS DEAD!

DRONA ALMOST FAINTED WITH SHOCK.

BUT SOON RECOVERED.

NO, IT CANNOT BE! NONE CAN KILL MY ASHWATTHAMA.

"DRONA RESUMED FIGHTING WITH ALL WEAPONS AT HIS DISPOSAL, SLAUGHTERING THE PANDAVA FORCES.

"SEEING HIS UNFAIR AND INHUMAN APPROACH, THE RISHIS FROM HEAVEN, LED BY AGNI, CAME TO MEET DRONA.

THIS UNRIGHTEOUSNESS DOES NOT BECOME YOU. LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS AND PREPARE FOR THE END.

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"DEEPLY MOVED BY THEIR COUNSEL AND BHEEMA'S EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENT, DRONA LOOKED AT YUDHISHTHIRA AND SAID—

IS IT TRUE THAT MY SON IS DEAD?

YUDHISHTHIRA HAD NEVER SPOKEN AN UNTRUTH IN HIS LIFE. BUT KRISHNA HAD ANTICIPATED THIS SITUATION AND TOLD HIM.

YOU MAY HAVE TO LIE TODAY TO SAVE YOUR ARMY. BUT THE SIN WILL NOT CLING TO YOU.

"SO NOW, HE REPLIED—

ASHWATTHAMA IS DEAD.

ADDING IN AN INAUDIBLE ASIDE—

ASHWATTHAMA THE ELEPHANT.

AS SOON AS THE LIE WAS UTTERED YUDHISHTHIRA'S CHARIOT TOUCHED THE GROUND.*

"HEARING THE NEWS FROM YUDHISHTHIRA, DRONA FAINTED. DHRISHTADYUMNA RUSHED TOWARDS HIM.

"WHEN DRONA GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, HE COULD NOT GAIN HIS EARLIER STRENGTH. YET HE KILLED DHRISHTADYUMNA'S HORSES.

* BECAUSE OF HIS RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT YUDHISHTHIRA'S CHARIOT WAS ALWAYS FOUR FINGERS' BREADTH ABOVE THE GROUND.

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"NOW DRONA SHOT SPECIAL SHORT-RANGE ARROWS, AT DHRISHTADYUMNA.

"SATYAKI INTERVENED IN TIME WITH A VOLLEY OF ARROWS TO DEFEND DHRISHTADYUMNA.

BHEEMA CONFRONTED DRONA AND SAID SARCASTICALLY -

YOU TEACH DHARMA TO OTHERS YET YOU ABANDON YOUR OWN DUTY AS A BRAHMANA. EVEN WITH YOUR SON DEAD, YOU CONTINUE TO FIGHT.

THROWING HIS WEAPONS AWAY, DRONA EXCLAIMED -

O KARNA, O KRIPA, DURYODHANA! FIGHT WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT. I HEREBY LAY DOWN MY ARMS.

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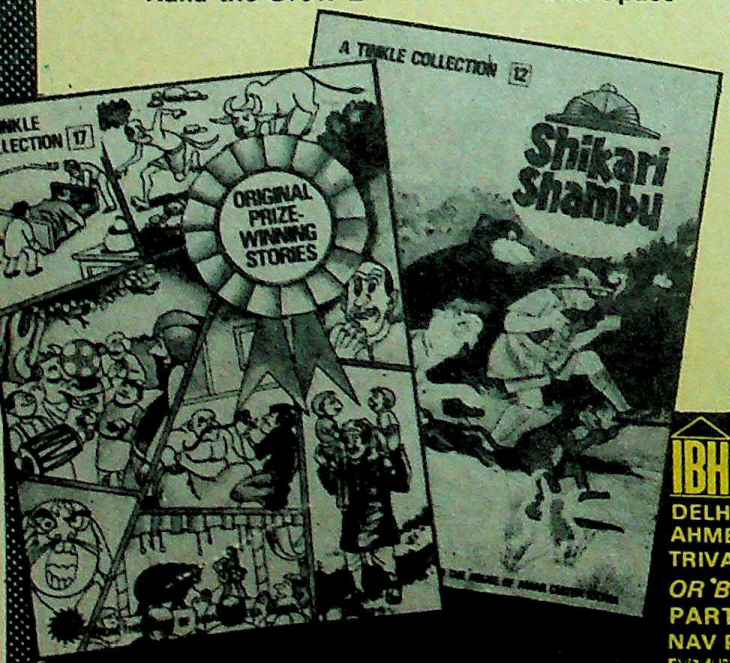

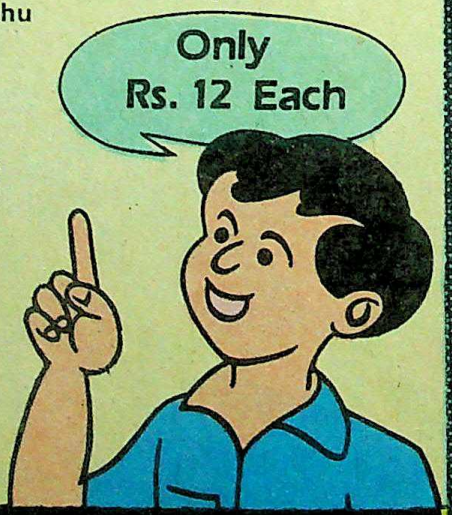

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